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Heroes of History

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FACTA DUCUM VIVENT, OPEROSAQUE GLORIA RERUM.— OVID, IN LIVIAM, 463.

THE HERO'S DEEDS AND HARD-WON FAME SHALL LIVE.

NAPOLEON

BONAPARTE.
FROM THE PAINTING BY APPIANI.

Heroes of History

NAPOLEON

WARRIOR AND RULER

AND THE MILITARY SUPREMACY OF REVOLUTIONARY FRANCE

BY

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PREFACE

NAPOLEON has had many biographers, and his figure towers over all other figures during the first years of the present century. Yet it is no easy task to present to the reader an accurate and life-like image of this extraordinary man, and to disengage his personality from the masses of details, and of exaggerated fictions, which have gathered round it. Napoleon has been the subject of excessive adulation, and of excessive detraction, beyond any eminent man of modern times. France made an idol of him for many years; the kings and princes he conquered vied with each other in doing him homage; and the greatest part of the civilised world joined in the chorus of eulogy.

He suddenly fell, and a violent reaction set in; in France the floodgates of calumny were let loose against him; the Coalition of old Europe denounced him as an outlaw; and he became the mark of incessant, passionate, and most foul obloquy. As the animosities and fears of the time passed away, a more just estimate was gradually formed of the

27X5 16

great warrior and ruler; and the generation of writers, which flourished between 1830 and 1860, has pronounced the most trustworthy judgments which have been formed on Napoleon. But the work of elucidating the truth, and clearing away misrepresentation and extravagance, was interrupted; and when the Empire was restored in France, the features of the real Napoleon were again obscured by clouds of flattering incense, or by the assiduous efforts of slanderers. The preponderance of defamation has been very great since the disastrous war of 1870–71, and the re-establishment of the Republic in France; and it has had a marked effect on universal opinion.

Notwithstanding these adverse influences, the genuine sources of information respecting Napoleon have largely increased; and the world has, for a considerable time, possessed the means of ascertaining to a very great extent, in writings emanating from himself, what this wonderful man was, and what is his proper place in history. The *Commentaries* and *Correspondence* of Napoleon have been published long ago; and these records of the author's experiences and career form the best available elements for a study of his life. Yet here, too, an impartial enquirer is, in some measure, baffled; the *Commentaries*, written at St. Helena, abound in mistakes of fact, and are not seldom one-sided and unfair; and there is reason to believe that large parts of the *Correspondence*, of more or less importance, have been withheld from the public. Still these writings are of inestimable value; they convey a vivid impression of Napoleon's nature and character; and this short

biography of the hero of modern France is largely founded on, and derived from them.

The writings, however, of a single personage, whatever may have been his pre-eminence, cannot supply the materials of an adequate, or even a nearly adequate account of the history of his time. I do not pretend to have read all that has been published about Napoleon; but I can truly say I have read a great deal; and this sketch shows, I hope, that I have studied the subject. I may briefly refer to a few of the principal authorities which relate to this memorable period, and to its master-spirit. The *Autobiography* of Metternich, and the *Memoirs* of Hardenberg,* show what Napoleon, and his conduct, and policy were from the point of view of the leading men of Austria and Prussia; and are of special value as regards the later part of the Emperor's reign. The *Memoirs* of Talleyrand occasionally display the malevolence of a conspirator and a renegade, but they abound in precious information, and they throw a flood of light on the negotiations and the intrigues of the Congress of Vienna. The letters and despatches of Castlereagh, many of the despatches of Wellington, letters and papers of Fox, of Lord Wellesley, of Canning, and of other British statesmen of the day, and the speeches of eminent public men in Parliament, from 1800 to 1815, show what the rulers of England, and the nation itself, thought of their mighty and most formidable enemy. From what may be called the French side, beside

* Included in Ranke's life. The *Mémoires d'un Homme d'État*, ascribed to Hardenberg are apocryphal.

the writings of Napoleon, many articles and passages in the *Moniteur* are important, and the works of Bignon and Thibeaudeau are of much value.

Of regular histories, I would name three as deserving the attention of the general reader. The great work of Thiers on *The Consulate and the Empire* has been written from an almost wholly French point of view, and with a strong National and Imperialist bias; but it is a fine monument to Napoleon, and his deeds; and it is a vast mine of information collected with assiduous research and industry. The *History* of Alison, though composed on High Tory principles, is, nevertheless, a candid and impartial narrative, and if deficient in artistic skill and arrangement, is a most useful repertory of accumulated facts. The book of Lanfrey is only a fragment; but it is very clever and should be perused; the author, who may be described as a Tacitus, without the great Roman's power, is the only libeller of Napoleon who has tried to rise to the level of history. Innumerable other histories and memoirs might be cited; and the short sketch of the late Mr. Fyffe is of real merit for what may be characterised as the politics of the time. Of the detractors of Napoleon little need be said; the ablest, perhaps, of these is M. Taine, and he deserves the name of the minute philosopher of calumny. But history has a simple answer to all these slanderers; Napoleon could never have risen to the heights he reached, could never have done the work he did, could never have acquired his pro-

digious authority and influence, had he been a monster of selfishness, of meanness, of lust, of wickedness.

The wars of this period were of unparalleled grandeur, and have been illustrated by many able and distinguished men. A diligent student will read over and over again the writings of Napoleon on his art, the admirable works of the Archduke Charles, and the despatches of Wellington. Clausewitz and Jomini are the best historians and critics of the military events of this epoch in general, and Napier has made the Peninsular War his own. A crowd of writers, besides, have described, with more or less excellence, different campaigns of this eventful time; and the memoirs of eminent soldiers, especially of well-known French generals, are most abundant. Very valuable descriptions of the French army, as it was formed and commanded by Napoleon, will be found in the *Souvenirs* of the Duc de Fezensac, and of M. de Gonneville, and above all, in the brilliant and trustworthy *Memoirs* of General Marbot, lately published. An admirable analysis of some of Napoleon's campaigns has been made by General Hamley in his masterly work, *The Operations of War*.

After these sheets had been corrected for the press, I have had an opportunity of reading the second part of Captain Mahan's admirable work on Sea Power. I have made no changes in my text; but it is gratifying to me to find that my views as regards Napoleon's project of a descent on England,

and the operations that ended at Trafalgar, and as regards the Continental System, coincide with those of a writer, who is not only the first living authority on naval warfare, but possesses remarkable political insight.

WILLIAM O'CONNOR MORRIS.

December 20, 1892.

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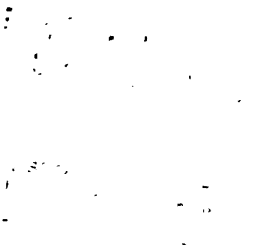

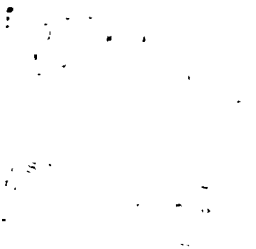

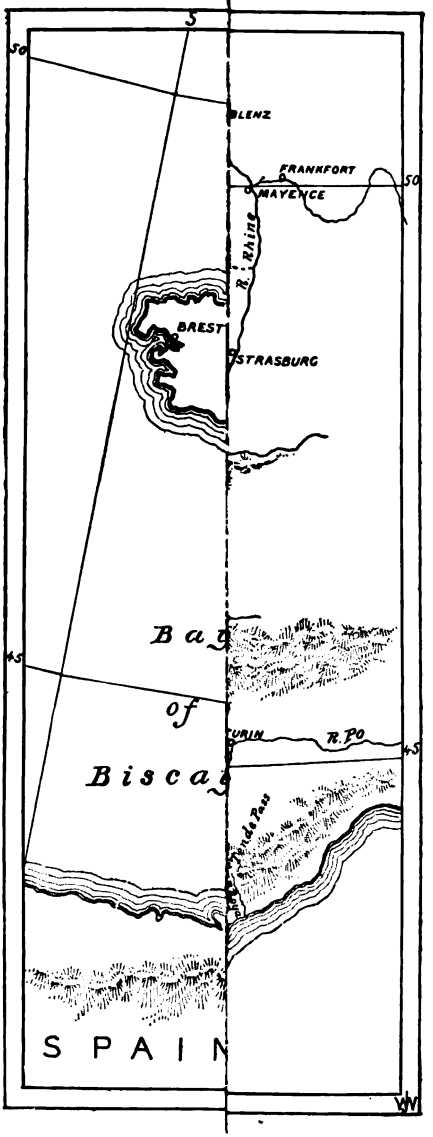
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NAPOLEON.

CHAPTER I.

Birth and parentage of Napoleon—Early associations—Paoli—The military schools of Brienne and Paris—Youthful studies—He enters the artillery—His first writings—He declares for the Revolution—Tries to obtain the command of the National Guard in Corsica—Expelled from the army—Sees the 20th of June and the 10th of August—Is restored to his place in the army—Quarrel with Paoli—Is exiled from Corsica with his family—At the siege of Toulon—With the army of Italy in 1794—Denounced as a friend of Robespierre—Struck off the list of general officers—The revolt of the Sections—13th Vendémaire—Marries Joséphine Beauharnais—Made commander of the army of Italy.

HE 15th of August, 1769, is probably* the date of the birth of Napoleon. The family of the future lord of the Continent belonged to the *noblesse* of Florence, but owing to the dissensions of the great Tuscan city, it had emigrated to Corsica in the sixteenth century. The Bonapartes—a name that has filled the world, has long

* The evidence that this is the true date seems greatly to preponderate. Colonel Jung, in his work, *Bonaparte et son Temps*, tome i.,

ago effaced the more correct Buonaparte—settled at Ajaccio, the chief town of the island; and though they kept up their ties with their Italian kinsmen, and were confirmed in their rank by a Grand Duke of Tuscany, they never emerged from the obscure position of petty lords of a few peasant vassals, or notables of a little provincial capital. Their fortunes declined in the eighteenth century, and Charles Bonaparte, born in 1746, though as head of the house he had some social influence, began life as an impoverished lawyer. The needy gentleman, while still in his teens, made a love match with a girl of no birth, but, though almost a child, of precocious beauty. Napoleon was the second son of this marriage; of thirteen children only eight grew up; and the Charlemagne of the nineteenth century, among other marvels of his famous career, raised his whole family to the rank of princes, and placed three of his brothers on kingly thrones. The faculties through which he attained a height never attained before in the modern world, seem in no sense to have been due to his father, a man devoid of eminent parts, with a certain turn for letters, indeed, and perhaps for Italian craft and suppleness, but indolent, and without strength of mind or of character. But his mother, Letizia Ramolino, had many gifts,—intelligence of a high order, intense energy of will, and firmness of purpose, combined with penetration and keenness of

39, 52, has urged all that can be alleged for the earlier date, 7th January, 1768. The point is not of much importance, except in so far as it suggests a charge of fraud against Napoleon's parents.

LETIZIA RAMOLINO BONAPARTE, "MADAME MÈRE."
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thought,—and these were marked qualities of her renowned offspring. Napoleon always treated her with affection and respect, gave her a foremost place in the imperial family, repeatedly sought her judicious advice, and consulted her at the most trying crisis of his life, when he was planning his extraordinary escape from Elba.

Napoleon in childhood witnessed events which made a profound impression on him, and may in some measure have shaped his character. Corsica had been at war with Genoa for forty years, but the islanders had made an heroic resistance, and they had gained independence in all but name, under the inspiration of a great ruler, Paoli. France, however, by a combination of force and fraud, had invaded and ultimately subdued the country; but a guerilla struggle continued for a time, and it was only put down by extreme severity. The parents of Napoleon, who, at first, seem to have been zealous in the patriotic cause, ere long adopted the conquering side, and it is a tradition, at least, that before he had reached his teens Napoleon described their conduct as a "base desertion." Be this as it may, the scenes he beheld were never forgotten, and probably had an influence on his nature when it was most ductile. "I was born," he wrote to Paoli in his twentieth year, "when our country was perishing; the cries of the dying, the groans of the oppressed, the tears of despair were around my cradle from my birth;" and these memories made him intensely Corsican, and inspired him with a dislike of all that was French, until he had reached the verge of man-

hood. Yet they seem to have left even deeper traces, and these may have made a mark on his subsequent career. The French conquest of Corsica was a triumph of organised power and guile, and if the conquered kicked against the pricks their opposition soon proved futile. The contest, too, shortlived as it was, was marked by cruelties on both sides, and the cause of patriotism was stained with deeds of blood, and was disgraced by savage excesses at once barbarous, foolish, and useless. And behind this outburst of passions let loose lay the prosperous era of the rule of Paoli, a warrior of no ordinary powers, and a legislator and administrator of real genius. These experiences cannot have been lost on the great military despot who was to be, on the abettor and author of *coups d'état*, on the inveterate foe of popular licence, and even of every popular movement, and, finally, on the chief who made France supreme in arms and obedient at home, who raised her out of defeat and anarchy, and who gave her the Concordat and the Code.

The domestic anecdotes of Napoleon's childhood are not numerous or of special interest. He seems to have been froward, passionate and yet self-contained; and he did not give proof of precocious talent. Through the interest of a French Corsican viceroy—his parents had paid him obsequious court—the lad was entered, when ten years old, as a cadet at the military school of Brienne, a well-known foundation of the Bourbon kings, originally designed to train sons of the poorer *noblesse* for the profession of arms. Napoleon was at this seminary from 1779

to 1784, and we begin to see what he was at the time, through reminiscences of genuine value. The boy in appearance was a foreigner; he spoke French badly, and with a strange accent; he belonged to a conquered and despised race; and the sons of the wealthy classes had given their tone to an institution changed from its purpose. No wonder then that the uncouth Corsican, with scarcely a livre he could call his own, became a butt for school jokes and tricks; and the dislike of his fellows was doubtless increased by the contempt he showed for French tastes and habits, and by his Corsican ways and sympathies. One who remembered Napoleon in these years has described him as a morose Timon; and Bourrienne, apparently true to fact in this, has told us that he was cold and reticent, even to the few lads whom he made his companions.

Yet the characteristics of future eminence are visible, even at this period of checked development and repressed tendencies. The keen and powerful intellect of the boy delighted in trains of exact reasoning; as a mathematician he was easily supreme. He studied history, too, with assiduous care; and his love of Plutarch's *Lives* and of Cæsar's *Commentaries*, of the heroic in action, and of great deeds of arms, foreshadowed the career of the coming warrior. He was not an adept in Greek and Latin; but this, Bourrienne says, was the fault of his teachers; about this time he began to acquire that mastery over the French tongue which made him one of its best exponents, though he was never versed in its Parisian subtleties. On the

whole his intellectual promise was great; his powers were made effective by intense industry, by an application that never flagged, and especially by his grasp of facts in detail. As to the moral side of Napoleon's character, it was thus set forth in an unfavourable report: he was "taciturn, fond of solitude, capricious, haughty, extremely disposed to egotism, seldom speaking, energetic in his answers, ready and sharp in repartee, full of self-love, ambitious, and of unbounded aspirations." Allowing for the gloom of an unhappy life, this picture faithfully represents features of the imperial figure that appears in history.

Napoleon passed from Brienne to the military school of Paris, another institution of the Bourbon monarchy. He was only a year at this place of instruction, where he seems, as had been the case at Brienne, to have kept aloof from his comrades and masters. One anecdote of these days may be noticed. The school was filled with sons of the *noblesse;* and the silent Corsican youth addressed a memorial, remarkable for its good sense and boldness, to the heads of the house, pointing out the evils of luxury in an apprenticeship for the life of camps. In 1785 Napoleon was made a sub-lieutenant of artillery in the regiment of La Fère; he spent the greater part of the next five years at different military stations in France.

The change which marks the approach of manhood may not have deeply affected his character, but it developed quickly and strongly his nascent genius. He became thoroughly versed in the

science of his arm, as notable examples were soon to prove; and he would have been the first of artillery chiefs, if his powers had not found an ampler scope and he had not been the greatest of the masters of war. His intellect, however, was not confined by the narrow bounds of professional duties; he studied military history with intense earnestness; became one of the most learned of soldiers; and especially pored for laborious hours over military maps and plans of fortresses, tasks that gave token of the great coming strategist. Nor were these the limits of that eager industry; he devoured treatises on law, philosophy, theology, and the art of government. Innumerable extracts and notes from his pen on these subjects remain unpublished; and it is impossible to doubt that, in Napoleon's case, the man of deep thought and of fruitful knowledge prepared the way for the man of action, and for the ruler who made the France of the Consulate.

He dabbled in authorship, too, in those days; but these first essays do not reveal genius, and are remarkable only as showing the influence of association and reigning opinion, even on a mind of the highest order. By this time his father had died; but his mother, surrounded by a young family, which, as it grew up, he seems to have loved, was the revered head of his Corsican home; he was often in the island on leave of absence; and tradition still points out a secluded spot where Napoleon, yet full of Corsican sympathies, composed a history, in youth, of Corsica. The book was dedicated to the Abbé Raynal, a brilliant specimen of the *philosophes* of the

age; but all that is remarkable in it is a tone of impatience, of ambition, and of scorn of mankind, and a real sense of the wrongs of Corsica. A second performance is more curious; the Academy of Lyons offered a prize for the best essay on the "means of making man happy"; and Napoleon competed for this distinction. Rousseau had long been the master of French thought; the composition of the great future despot abounds in the spurious liberalism, in the trashy sentiment, in the "ideology," in a word, which were singled out by him for scoffs and contempt, when he had risen to power. The essay, written doubtless against the grain, was marked by the judge as "bad and feeble." The Emperor took care to destroy his manuscript, but a copy that survives proves how genius, when false to itself, can be in eclipse.

The crisis of Europe, which was to give birth to a career of marvels, ere long appeared. Napoleon certainly felt sincere reverence for the grandeur and power of the Bourbon kings; he had many of the instincts of the old *régime;* and he did not regard the institutions of France with the aversion general in 1789. He was strict, too, in his ideas of discipline; his profession had increased the strong love of order and authority which was a gift of nature. But he was a needy youth, consumed by ambition; in the divisions which had distracted the army for years he had usually taken the side of the soldier, though he stood well with his brother-officers, already impressed with a sense of his power; and he declared boldly for the Revolution.

and for the National Assembly when it began its work.

Events in Corsica brought out for the first time, and on a small scale, some qualities of the future man of action. The island, though still a French dependency, had received a kind of local liberty, in harmony with the ideas of 1789; its old champion, Paoli, had been replaced in power, and his influence was for the time supreme. Napoleon hastened to see the aged patriot; so fascinated him that he vowed his young friend was cast in the mould of Plutarch's heroes; and launched an angry invective against a deputy, at this moment sitting at Versailles, as a representative of the *noblesse* of Corsica, who years before, had betrayed his country to the ambitious minister of Louis XV. The "Letter to Buttafuoco," though disfigured by the declamation and rant of the day, has, nevertheless, a true ring of passion; and when it was written there can be little doubt that Napoleon was still at heart a Corsican. The next step of the aspiring soldier was to try to obtain the command of the National Guard, which was being organised in his native town, as in all parts of the dominions of France; and he addressed himself to the task with untiring energy, and with admirable adroitness and persuasive skill. A singular incident now occurred; a French commissioner, whose assent was required to the election, inclined to two other candidates, and Napoleon contrived to arrest him quietly, but with many professions of respect and honour. This, and an attempt which it is said he made to enter Ajaccio and to seize the

citadel, has led to a belief that at this juncture Napoleon was thinking of laying hands on Corsica, and of violently shaking off the yoke of France; but this obviously is a far-fetched notion. Yet the imprisonment of the commissioner sufficiently proves that the future author of the 18th Brumaire was capable of an audacious *coup d'état.*

In this attempt to climb into power in Corsica, Napoleon had exceeded his leave of absence, and his name was struck off from the lists of the army. He was some months in Paris in the spring of 1792, poor, restless, and with no career before him; his thoughts turned for a moment to trade and lodging-house keeping. The Revolution was now passing into its phase of terror; yet, forlorn and hopeless as his position seemed, he never dreamed of joining the chiefs of the Commune, or of reaching fortune on a flood-tide of anarchy. He beheld the ignominious scene of the 20th of June, when Louis XVI. was made a puppet for the insolent glee of a howling mob, and the darker tragedy of the 10th of August, when the Bourbon monarchy ignobly fell, its palace sacked, and its defenders slaughtered; and on both occasions he spoke with contempt of the weakness of the King, and of the cowardly cruelty of a rabble that "should have been cut down with grapeshot."

By this time Germany was marching into France; the Duke of Brunswick had stirred Paris to frenzy; a great majority of the officers of the royal army had joined the ranks of the unpatriotic *émigrés* and a revolutionary government was taxed to the

utmost to find means to resist the invaders. Napoleon regained his place as a soldier; it may well be that the youth of genius already perceived, in his own words, that "a career for talent was being opened," amidst the wreck of an old order of things, and the beginnings of an era of war and confusion; but, be this as it may, he became thenceforward a zealous supporter of French interests, and of all that seemed to maintain the power of France, in her struggle with monarchic and feudal Europe.

He took no part in the memorable campaign which saw Valmy and ended at Jemmapes; and his first introduction to war was unfortunate. In 1793 a French squadron endeavoured to make a descent on Sardinia. Napoleon was with the invading force, but the expedition completely failed; and the future commander has vividly described the lawless Jacobinism of the crews of the ships and the undisciplined licence of the troops on board. An event now happened which marks another turn in the fortunes of the still unknown soldier, and is supposed to reveal a change in his sympathies, severely condemned by a certain class of writers. The Reign of Terror was supreme in France; a ferocious tyranny had replaced anarchy; and the blood-stained Committee of Public Safety, beset by civil war and by foreign invasion, was wildly calling the whole nation to arms, and was crushing down rebellion by the most remorseless cruelties. The people of Corsica, happily outside the fury of the revolutionary storm, had no taste for this savage violence; it condemned ferocious edicts against nobles and priests, orders

found innocuous in its own experience; it resented the frightful excesses of Paris, and its discontent exhibited itself in a strong movement against the French government. The feelings of Paoli were all on this side; a breach widened between the chief men of Corsica and the knot of Jacobins who ruled in Paris; and Paoli was summoned to appear at the bar of the Convention and to account for his conduct,—an order equivalent to a sentence of death. The islanders rallied round their hero; there was wild talk of a general rising; and Paoli certainly turned his eyes towards England and her victorious fleets. Napoleon was at this time at Ajaccio; in the angry conflict which divided Corsica he pronounced decidedly for the cause of France; it has been said that, for the second time, he attempted to seize the forts of the capital. He had evidently become a man of mark; a general assembly convened by Paoli condemned him as a traitor and a public criminal; and after a fierce outburst of popular passion he was banished from Corsica with all his family.

The tribe of detractors, which carps at greatness, has seen nothing but the vilest selfishness in Napoleon's conduct at this crisis. The feelings that led him to break with Paoli and to take what seemed the unpatriotic side were probably of a mixed kind; and ambition, doubtless, was one of their elements. But he was a soldier in the pay and service of France; he was bound to think of her rights and interests; and not impossibly he sincerely wished to save Corsica from being made a battle-field for the

hostile forces of France and of England. Unquestionably he held the name and the deeds of Paoli in reverence in after years; and he did much for his island birthplace when at those heights of fortune which bewilder memory. Having seen to the safety of his kindred at Marseilles he joined the Republican levies which at this time were endeavouring to put down with fire and sword the great Royalist and Girondin rising of the South. He took part, it is believed, in the siege of Lyons, and commanded the artillery in the attack on Avignon; but he has left no record of these services, and all that we possess of him at this conjuncture is a very curious pamphlet from his pen, the last and the ablest of the productions of his youth.

The *Supper of Beaucaire* is a conversation, imaginary, of course, between citizens of the towns in revolt and a republican soldier; it is the first extant specimen of the clear insight, and of the close logic which, with other qualities, distinguish Napoleon's writings on war. As was natural, too, at a terrible time, when the minds of men were unloosed from their moorings, when faith and principle were forgotten names, and when brute force was the only law, there is much of the doctrine that might is right; an argument which Napoleon presses home, with an energy that would delight Carlyle. But the most striking feature of the piece is this: the author stands aloof from the factions which were tearing France and social order to pieces; he regards the scenes before him with evident disgust.

The great military genius of the modern world

now suddenly shone out with conspicuous lustre. Toulon had taken part in the insurrection against the Jacobin government installed in Paris; a garrison of the allies had entered the town, and an English and Spanish fleet held the adjoining roadsteads. The Convention sent a considerable force to lay siege to the rebel city, but the commanders were incapable men; there were no heavy guns to reduce the place; and the French levies, scattered along an external circle of deep valleys, hills, and ravines, could not even approach the forts or the ramparts. An accident seems to have caused Napoleon, then a mere subordinate, to be near Toulon; he was introduced to Carteaux, the general in command, by the Republican deputies on the spot; and if his reminiscences are correct, he perceived, at a glance, the true way to conduct the operations to a successful issue.

Carteaux, a painter, who had taken to the work of war, in the hurly-burly of an extraordinary time, conscious happily of his own ignorance, abandoned to the young artillery officer the direction of the works of the siege. Napoleon managed to obtain the ordnance that was required; his energy and skill were soon in the mouths of everyone, and the batteries of the French, which had been impotent, became numerous and formidable in the extreme. On the 15th of October, 1793, a council of war was held in the camp; the war office had sent a plan from Paris for carrying out a regular siege, but this required an army of sixty thousand men, whereas Carteaux had only twenty-five thousand, and there

was not material sufficient for a protracted effort. Napoleon proposed a wholly different scheme; a double headland, he remarked, commanded the roadsteads; the allied fleets were the real defence of Toulon; and if the two points of vantage were once occupied and crowned with batteries of sufficient strength, the hostile squadrons would be forced to make off, and the place and all its outworks would fall of themselves. Putting his finger on a map, and marking the selected spot, "there," he exclaimed, "is the key of Toulon"; and his hearers were so struck with the evident truth of an inspiration of genius in war, that they accepted, in part at least, the project.

Weeks, however, elapsed before Napoleon was enabled to carry out his brilliant conception. Carteaux was replaced in his command by Doppet, a doctor who had been made a general on account of his fierce Jacobin faith; the operations were delayed by his ignorance, and there was a want of skilful engineering officers. The Allies, too, had perceived that their ships could be reached by fire from the adjoining shore; and they constructed a fort of remarkable strength, covering the very headlands which were Napoleon's object. These difficulties, however, were at last overcome; Dugommier, a veteran and real soldier, who succeeded Doppet, gave Napoleon a free hand and valuable aid. The ascendency of genius did the rest; the obstacle of the fort was at last mastered, partly by surprise, and in part by force; and sallies of the garrison were repulsed with success by secondary efforts of the besieging

army. The results were then seen of the admirable skill and resource of the young master of war. As soon as the decisive point was seized, and guns placed on the double promontory, the allied fleets began to sheer off; they carried away the retiring garrison, and within forty-eight hours the Republican army, astounded at its unexpected triumph, was in complete possession of Toulon, amidst horrible scenes of blood and confusion.

Napoleon was justly made a general of his arm, for an exploit worthy of a great captain, and which, like the egg of Columbus, shows how the common eye can miss what capacity sees. He was employed, during the next few months, in restoring the defences of the coasts of Provençe, which had long been neglected and in decay; and he brought these into a state of efficiency. Half-mad Jacobins denounced him for constructing and arming a fort to protect Marseilles and its harbour from the dreaded British cruisers; the "liberticide" "intended to erect a Bastille"; and he narrowly escaped the ban of the jealous Convention.

His next mission was to what had been pompously called the Army of Italy and the Alps, two ill-connected masses, which, after the conquest of Savoy and Nice in 1792, were confronted by a Sardinian force covering the approaches to the plain lands of Piedmont. He had become known as an eminent soldier; he had already subjugated more than one of the companions-in-arms he was to raise to fame; and one of the deputies with the army, the younger Robespierre, the brother of the blood-stained enthu-

siast at this moment the tyrant of France, seems to have been "fascinated by his transcendant merit." Napoleon planned the operations that followed, and was their real director from first to last, though Masséna, the future chief of the Imperial Marshals, virtually replacing Dumerbion, a worn-out veteran, had nominally, perhaps, the supreme command. The hostile army was in position, in two entrenched camps of remarkable strength upon the spurs of the French Alps trending towards the mouths of the Roya and the Var, and it had been repeatedly attacked in front in vain throughout the summer of 1793. Napoleon, holding the enemy on the spot in check, turned the defences by a bold and rapid march, made through the hills at a distance to the right, and screened with the skill in stratagem in which he excelled. The Sardinians, threatened in the rear, abandoned the formidable line they had held with success; they lost Saorgio, an important point; and their columns disappeared through the pass of Tende, yielding the seaboard to the victors from Nice to Genoa. The result was brilliant, if not decisive; but it was to be the prelude of far greater triumphs. The campaign of 1794 made Napoleon acquainted with the theatre which was to become the scene of his first efforts in an immortal contest; and it filled him with visions of glory at hand. He tells us how, after this passage of arms, he gazed from Tende over the plains below; and, like Hannibal, saw in Italy a land for a conqueror.

A dash into the plains near the Cadibona Pass —the first stage of the campaign of 1796—closed the

operations of 1794; and we see Napoleon next at Toulon, preparing the fleet which, within a few months, was defeated, even by the feeble Hotham. During these years he had given his great powers to the service of the Jacobin government; for which he has been absurdly vilified. He had no choice, as a soldier, but to obey the powers that were supreme in France; and, much as he hated the Reign of Terror, he seems to have been convinced that the success of the Gironde would have been fatal to the Revolution, and its cause,* which commanded his zealous support and sympathy. In this, and other instances, calumny takes care not to refer to the acts of Napoleon; these prove that he abhorred Jacobinism and its revolting deeds; he saved *émigrés* and brother officers from the emissaries of the Parisian tyrants; and, in fact, like every one of the great warriors of France, he detested the Terrorists, and their policy of blood.

As we have seen, however, he had been on terms of intimacy with a brother of Robespierre; and he was involved in disgrace, and real danger, after the fall of the head of the Jacobin leaders. He was charged by Salicetti, a fellow-countryman, in mission at the time with the army, who, as a friend of Paoli, disliked Napoleon, with having conspired against the State, as "the man and tool of the two Robes-

* This was the deliberate opinion of Napoleon writing many years afterwards at St. Helena. "Le resultat est connu: les campagnes de 1793 et de 1794 ont sauvé la France de l'invasion étrangère. Aurait on obtenu le même resultat si la Gironde l'eût emporté, et que la Montagne eût été sacrifiée au 31 Mai? Nous ne le pensons pas." —*Commentaries*, tome i., 5. Ed. 1867.

pierres"; and he was cited to Paris as a "suspected person." Almost anything was possible in the fierce reaction of Thermidor against the extreme Jacobins; but the accusation was not followed up; and the young general was set free, and even highly praised. Yet the association with a Terrorist clung to Napoleon; and for some months he was under a kind of proscription. A Girondin was at the war office; the policy of the new government was to separate the officers of the southern armies more or less suspected of Jacobin sympathies; and the conqueror of Toulon was relegated to the humble rank of general of a brigade of infantry in the army of the West. After angry expostulation Napoleon refused to accept a post he thought a dishonour; and, soon afterwards, his name was erased from the roll of generals in active service.

His hopes of advancement now seemed gone; the growing ambition, which was to know no bounds, had apparently received a fatal check; for some months he was again in extreme poverty, and in a position almost desperate. He turned for a moment his thoughts towards the East; addressed a memorial to the men in power proposing to reorganise the armies of the Porte; and perhaps was on the point of departing from France, when, as in the similar case of Cromwell, a change of fortune kept him on the present scene. The army of Italy, since it had lost his counsels, had not been on the whole successful; it seemed probable that it would be driven back to the seaboard, though it gained a battle, ere long, at Loano. A new minister of war was now in

office; and Napoleon, whose powers seem to have been well known, was selected by him to draw up a scheme for operations in Italy, in 1795–96. This plan, admirable for its grand conceptions, and, showing extraordinary knowledge of details, anticipates one of its author's masterpieces, the memorable campaign of 1796; and is a striking exhibition of Napoleon's genius.* It was characteristically pronounced "insane" by the men of routine, to whom it was sent.

Napoleon was soon to play a conspicuous part on the great stage of affairs in Paris. The Convention, assembled after the fall of the throne, had dragged the Revolution through a sea of blood; but it had saved the State, and rolled back invasion; and its stormy career had come to an end. In the summer of 1795, after the fashion of the age, it had framed a new constitution for France; and this, called the "Constitution of the Year III.," had been accepted by a large popular vote. But the self-denying ordinance, which had been imposed by the National Assembly on its own members, was supposed to have caused all kinds of evils; and it was carefully provided, in the present scheme, that two-thirds of the seats in the Convention should not be vacated in the first instance, and for some time, and that one-third only should be thrown open for election to the future Legislative Body. The restriction was not

* The project deserves the careful study of every historical enquirer. From a military and political view alike it is most remarkable. It will be found in the *Napoléon Correspondance*, tome i., 64, 78. Ed. 1868.

opposed in the Provinces; but it exasperated all that was bold, or stirring, or ambitious, or eager for change in Paris; and a violent movement was formed against the Directory, as the new government was called. The agitation was strengthened by friends of the Bourbons, by the remains of the suppressed Gironde, and even by some of the men of Thermidor; there was a revolutionary appeal to force; the National Guards of Paris were brought over; and the forty-eight sections or wards of the city were organised for an armed rising. The Directors seem to have been taken by surprise; their first measures were halting and weak; and Menou, the officer they placed in command of the few regular troops on the spot, having allowed his men to be hemmed in and surrounded, capitulated to a Section which he had been ordered to disarm. This became the signal for a widespread revolt; the leaders of the Sections called their men to arms; a bloody revolution seemed imminent, and the government was on the brink of a precipice. In this conjuncture the name of Napoleon was mentioned by the affrighted Directors as that of a soldier fit to cope with the crisis, and he was made second in command of the forces in Paris. The chief command was given to Barras, a man of no capacity, but one who had seen the Revolution in all its phases, and a member of the existing government.

Napoleon paused before he took this command; but we may disregard the sneers of detractors; his hesitation was not due to guile. We may accept his reasonable account of his conduct; opinion ran strongly

against the government; the Sections contained the flower of the citizens; and victory, in such circumstances, after a fight in the streets, would be an ominous and unhappy triumph. On the other hand, the cause of the Convention was that of the Revolution, its rights, and its interests, and the success of the rising would probably lead to a counter-revolution, and the subjugation of France. Barras left everything to the young commander; Napoleon's arrangements were quietly made; and they showed characteristic energy and skill. He secured the only artillery at hand, which had nearly fallen into the power of the enemy; he posted his little army, about eight thousand strong, in the broad spaces around the Louvre, commanding the approaches and the course of the Seine, but with a way for retreat open; and the danger was so pressing that he gave arms to the Convention, and held the members in reserve. The forces of the Sections, forty thousand men, but ill-ordered, and without a single gun, issued from the labyrinth of streets and alleys of the adjoining region of old Paris; and, after a delay of some hours, the cumbrous masses began the attack. The result was never for a moment doubtful; the assailants were dispersed by a "whiff of grapeshot," to use the expressive words of Carlyle; and the soldiery, charging in every direction, drove the scattered fugitives in rout before them. One feature of the combat perhaps deserves notice: Napoleon was implored to fire blank cartridge, in the hope that this would dissolve the multitude; but this, he remarked, would be false clemency, and the decisive

THE EMPRESS JOSÉPHINE.

FROM THE PAINTING BY GÉRARD IN THE GALLERY AT VERSAILLES.

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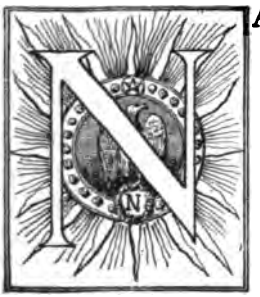
effect of his shotted guns probably averted a bloody and uncertain struggle.

The events of the 5th of October, 1795, known to history as the 13th Vendémiaire, mark the beginning of the rule of the sword in the progress of revolution in France. Napoleon was eagerly thanked by the government; was appointed General of the Interior, and spent some months in quenching the ashes of the revolt, and in making the National Guards of Paris safe. Another turn in his career took place; and this had a strong influence on his life and fortunes. While still in his teens he had attracted the notice of a fine lady of the old *régime;* and his concentrated nature had, for a time, expanded under the spell of her sympathy. He had, also, had some fleeting attachments, and his letters show that he was not superior to the dissipation and amusements of youth, given free scope in an age of licentiousness. He became intimate with Joséphine Beauharnais, the widow of a noble, who had been a victim of the fatal axe during the Reign of Terror, and the intimacy ripened into a deep-felt passion. The life of Joséphine had not been pure; in after years she justly gave rise to the jealous suspicions of an incensed husband; but she was an amiable, if a weak woman, and she loved Napoleon with a genuine love, not unmingled with awe and even terror. The pair were married in the spring of 1796, and the marriage brought splendid advancement with it. Barras had been one of Joséphine's lovers—a debt, he felt, was due to Napoleon, and the young general, through his powerful interest,

was appointed to the command of the army of Italy. Other causes may have perhaps concurred; the French army had done nothing since Loano, and required a chief; the plans of Napoleon for Italian conquest were justly admired at the war office, and possibly the Directors were not sorry to get rid of a man of genius, whose presence at home they had begun to fear. But the marriage was, perhaps, the decisive reason, and a few words which dropped from Napoleon, at this memorable point of his career, show what was already his faith in himself, and what he thought of the inferior men placed through his boldness and skill in the seat of government. "Do these people imagine," he had said to his intended bride, "that I want their help to rise? They will be too glad, some day, to accept mine. My sword is at my side, and I will go far with it."

CHAPTER II.

Invasion of Piedmont—Armistice—Invasion of Lombardy—Napoleon at Milan—Passage of the Mincio—Siege of Mantua—Napoleon in Central Italy—Attack of Würmser—Battles of Castiglione and Bassano—Complete defeat of Würmser—Attack of Alvinzi—Battle of Arcola—Second attack of Alvinzi—Battle of Rivoli—Fall of Mantua—Affairs of Italy—Treaty of Tolentino—Napoleon invades the Austrian states—Passage of the Tagliamento—Preliminaries of Leoben—Negotiations—The 18th Fructidor—Treaty of Campo Formio—Fall of Venice—Napoleon returns to France—His conduct and policy in Italy.



APOLEON had reached his headquarters at Nice, in the last days of March, 1796. The army, of which he had received the command, was from thirty-five to forty thousand strong; but it had suffered terribly from the results of several campaigns in the French Alps. Its organisation had been almost destroyed; its cavalry and artillery were scanty and weak; and it was in a state of destitution, injurious in the extreme to military order, discipline, and worth. But it was almost wholly composed of veteran troops, accustomed to hard-

ships, versed in war, and fired with revolutionary passions; it was filled with young officers, thirsting for renown, and not ignorant of the powers of their chief; and it was capable of heroic efforts when formed and led by a great commander. Napoleon devoted a few days to making arrangements to take the field; he displayed remarkable administrative skill; and his eager soldiery were soon able to move. The plan of his operations was, in part, military, in part, as was sometimes the case with him, founded on well-conceived political views; it was marked by characteristic genius and insight. His army held the crest of the hills, where the Alps join the extreme western Apennines, and was spread along the neighbouring seaboard; it commanded a passage into the plains of Piedmont, and was able to march quickly along the coast towards Genoa. Opposed to it was an allied army of good Piedmontese and Austrian troops, about sixty or sixty-five thousand men; but this was placed behind the northern slopes of the range; its distant parts could not easily unite; it rested on two divergent bases; its chiefs were divided by the old jealousies of the sovereigns of Turin and Vienna; and if boldly and skilfully attacked, it might be cut in two, and defeated in detail.

Surveying the situation with a comprehensive glance, Napoleon marched a detachment towards Genoa; his centre was for a moment endangered; but the movement caused Beaulieu, his chief adversary, to direct a large body of troops near the menaced point; and this was exactly what his

enemy wanted. Napoleon, countermarching with extreme celerity, and concentrating his men with ease on the coast, poured in force through the Cadibona Pass, an avenue he had, we have seen, explored; and the Austrians, outnumbered and hemmed in, were driven, routed, from Montenotte. Beaulieu had endeavoured to join hands with Colli, his colleague, far away on his right; but his nimble foe was too quick for both; their armies only approached each other; and they were separated, and beaten in a double attack, first at Millesimo and then at Dego. The discomfited chiefs, as had been foreseen, fell back upon their bases in retreat, Beaulieu towards Milan, Colli towards Turin; and Napoleon seized the opportunity at once. He called in the detachment he had left on the hills; turned against Colli in overwhelming strength; struck him down in a decisive fight at Mondovi; and was soon in full march on the Piedmontese capital, having in ten days, by his brilliant manœuvres, nearly destroyed two armies far superior to his own. "Hannibal crossed the Alps, but we have turned them," he exclaimed to his enthusiastic soldiers, as, emerging from the mountain barrier in their rear, they gazed on the fertile and spreading plains enriched by the feeders of the Upper Po.

An embassy from the Court of Turin waited on the conqueror, and begged him to treat when the French army had drawn near the capital. Napoleon had no power even to grant an armistice; the jealous Directory had appointed his old enemy, Salicetti, with another deputy, to observe and

to report on his conduct; and he had been enjoined, if the chance offered, to stir up a revolution in Piedmont. But he set restrictions and instructions at nought which interfered with the profound designs of Italian conquest he had long formed; the terms he offered were gladly accepted; the great fortresses which are the keys of Piedmont and the roads into France were placed in his power; and he sent a message to Paris to announce his victories, and to induce the government to confirm a suspension of arms, to which he had already given assent. These wise military measures, the first examples of the ascendency over the heads of the State, which before long was to become complete, secured his communications and gave him a new base, objects of supreme importance to him; and he was soon prepared for another forward movement.

Beaulieu had, by this time, retreated to the Po, making for Lombardy, then a province of Austria; in the negotiations with the Piedmontese envoys, Napoleon had obtained a passage for his troops, at Valenza; he had openly given out that he would cross at that point; and the Austrian leader had placed a large part of his army, not far from Valenza, to oppose his enemy. But the professions of Napoleon were a feint only, one of the innumerable instances of the skill in stratagem, in which he has surpassed all masters of war. He sent a detachment towards Valenza; and then "rapid as thought," in his own words, he hastened to Piacenza, effected the passage, and was thus not only over the Po, but had approached his adversary's flank and

rear, and had forced him to hurry across the Ticino. Beaulieu, thoroughly alarmed at the sudden collapse of the line of defence, to which he had trusted, fell, outmanœuvred, back toward the Adda; Napoleon dashed forward to cut him off; and a part of the French and Austrian armies met in fierce encounter on the bridge of Lodi. A skilful movement of Napoleon's cavalry, and an irresistible charge of his footmen, decided the issue of a well-contested battle; the Austrians contrived to effect their escape, but they were so disheartened, and had suffered such losses, that Beaulieu was unequal to a further effort, and sullenly retreated behind the Mincio. On this occasion the French soldiery gave their chief a name that will live in history; they saluted him as their "Little Corporal"; and Napoleon has told us that his ambition, the vague dream hitherto of the youth of genius, took definite shape, for the first time, "after the terrible passage of the bridge of Lodi."

The French entered Milan on the 15th of May, having "rushed down," in their leader's phrase, "from the Apennine, with the speed of a torrent." The Lombards abhorred the yoke of Austria; the ideas that marched with the Tricolor had made way in an oppressed province; and the hope of an independent Italy, though as yet faint, had dawned upon the minds of the people. Napoleon caressed them with flattering words; received their acclamations with apparent gratitude; and even organised the city, and its authorities, on the pattern of the municipal towns of France. But his real thoughts

were for his army and France; he only dallied with Italian liberty, in order to promote what he deemed higher interests. He had already extracted considerable sums from two representatives of the feudalism of the past, the Dukes of Modena and of Parma; he now levied a great contribution from Milan; and, after the fashion of the warriors of Rome, he sent choice trophies of Italian art, torn from galleries and museums, to adorn Paris. With the funds of which he had become thus master, he supplied the wants of his destitute troops; established large magazines and depots; increased his weak force of horsemen and guns; restored discipline and put down pillage; and, while he added greatly to his military force, he despatched a part of the spoils of Lombardy to the government at home, to recruit its finances. Whatever mere detractors have said, this policy and conduct was of a piece with that of most generals of the armies of Revolutionary France; and what is chiefly to be noted in it, is, that it was carried out with a careful method, and with a power in administration before unknown, and that it made invasion more certain and safe, and on the whole was less harsh and oppressive, than the irregular and unchecked rapine, which had hitherto accompanied French conquests.

While Napoleon was thus strengthening his hold on Italy, and making preparations for new efforts, a message from Paris threatened to bring his ambitious projects to a sudden close. The Directory ordered him to divide his army; to leave part of it under another chief, and, with the other part,

to march into the depths of the peninsula, and to invade Rome and Naples. He at once refused to carry out a design, due in part to suspicious fears of himself, and in part to erroneous military views; but the offer he made to throw up his command was fortunately not accepted by the men in power in France, already yielding to the spell of his influence. He was ere long on his way to the Mincio, assured that he would reach and crush Beaulieu, when he was compelled hastily to retrace his steps. An Austrian garrison still held the citadel of Milan, which was being besieged by a French detachment; the partisans of Austria, powerful among the nobles, the priests, and the wealthy classes, lifted their heads as the French army departed; the exactions of the invaders had, no doubt, provoked discontent even among the people, and Pavia and other towns broke out into a revolt, which extended over the adjoining country. Napoleon sternly put the insurrection down; a village was burned, and Pavia was sacked; but the attitude of goodwill which the great mass of the Lombards steadily maintained towards the French disproves the charge of extreme barbarity alleged against him by more than one writer. He had rejoined his army by the close of May; when Beaulieu, baffled by superior skill, and easily defeated by exulting foes,* whose augmented numbers and

* The state of the French army at the beginning of the campaign and when it reached Mantua presented an astonishing contrast. Napoleon wrote thus to the Directory on 8th April: "J' ai trouvé cette armée non seulement denuée de tout, mais sans discipline et dans une insubordination perpetuelle; le mécontentement était

growing moral power, made resistance, for the present, impossible, was quickly dislodged from the line of the Mincio. The beaten chief retreated into the Tyrol with the remains only of an army, in despair; his adversary at once laid siege to Mantua, almost the last spot in Lombardy retained by Austria.

The theatre had been at last attained marked out by Napoleon as a battle-ground, on which to contend for the prize of Italy. With true insight he had long before perceived that Austria was the principal foe, in the peninsula, to be feared by France; if her power were broken, the Lesser States of Italy could be easily dealt with; and this was one chief reason why he had risked everything, sooner than march southwards, with Austria in his rear. But he had learned from the campaigns of Eugene and Villars, or it had been an inspiration of his own genius, that the course of the Adige was the true line on which to resist Austria in her descents on Italy; the river issuing from the hills of the Tyrol, skirting the Lake of Garda and the adjoining ranges, and ending in the morasses of the Po, forms a barrier of extraordinary strength; and Napoleon had made this great position of vantage his principal object in his advance from Piedmont. The Adige was, at this moment before him; but it was necessary to occupy both its

telle que des malveillants s'en étaient emparés." This was his account of the same army on the 1st of June: "Ils jouent et rient avec la mort; ils sont aujourd'hui parfaitement accoutumés avec la cavalerie, dont ils se moquent. Rien n'égale leur intrépidité, si ce n'est la gaieté avec laquelle ils font les marches les plus forcées; ils chantent tour à tour la patrie et l'amour."—*Correspondance*, tome i., 127; 345.

banks, and to hold the fortresses, which command the stream, in order to turn it to full account; this coveted strip of territory was in the hands of a neutral power, the Republic of Venice; and how was it to be mastered by a French army, essential as it was to its commander's purpose? Napoleon seized an occasion that offered. He had made fair speeches to Venetian envoys, when he had attained Brescia, and approached the Mincio; but Beaulieu had entered Peschiera, a strong place of Venice, in his late retreat; and this contempt of a neutral's rights gave Napoleon a pretext to cross the Adige, to throw French garrisons into Legnano and Verona, fortified towns which form almost the only important passages, and thus completely to attain his object. This was doubtless a violation of international claims; but it was not so flagrant as has been generally supposed. In every war of the eighteenth century, the neutrality of Venice had been set at nought; the armies of Austria, of France, and of Spain, had made her provinces a scene of conflict; and, in these circumstances, we cannot feel surprised that scruples did not stand in the way of Napoleon.

The fall of the citadel of Milan was, by this time, certain; but events at a distance had begun to threaten the position of the invaders on the Adige. Two great French armies had entered Germany; but their chiefs, Moreau and Jourdan, had made no progress; Austria chafed at her defeats in Italy; and Würmser, a veteran of the Seven Years' War, was despatched from the Rhine to endeavour to regain all that she had lost on the Po and the Mincio.

He could not, however, reach the Adige for some weeks; and Napoleon found time to attend to the wishes which the Directory had not ceased to express, and to turn his attention towards Southern Italy. The course he adopted was much the same as that which he had pursued in Lombardy; he verified his remark that France had not much to fear from the banks of the Po to the Straits of Messina. An insurrection had gathered on his rear, and harassed his communications with Provence; he quelled it by a sudden display of force; he menaced Genoa with a weighty vengeance, for its aristocracy connived at the rising. He overawed the Vatican and the Court of Naples, constant plotters against the hated Republic; showed again his contempt of the rights of neutrals by sending a detachment across the Apennines, which entered the States of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and attacked English commerce and ships at Leghorn; gave the people of Bologna, and of other provinces of the Pope, a promise of new-born liberty, but only because he wished to establish a dependency of France, as a check on Rome; and, wherever he advanced, carried out his system of organised and far-reaching exactions.

Yet in his relations with the powers he humbled, it had already appeared that the young general was very different from the men who, hitherto, had represented the France of the Revolution abroad. He had shown peculiar deference to the envoys of the Pope; had dropped the Republican cant and style; and had exhibited in his frequent diplomatic intercourse not only remarkable craft and tact, but sympa-

thy with the old order of Europe. He maintained a stern and suspicious attitude to one only of the States of Italy. Venice had complied with all his demands; she had contributed to the support of his army, and had repeatedly made professions of friendship; but he instinctively felt she was a deadly enemy; and he stood carefully on his guard against her.

Napoleon had returned to Mantua near the end of July, to resist the impending attack of Würmser. The forces in the hands of the Austrian leader were from 65,000 to 70,000 men; the French were not more than 50,000, including the troops besieging the fortress; and at Vienna success was deemed certain. Relying on his great superiority of strength, and thinking that his adversary would keep his positions around Mantua, until it was too late, Würmser divided his army into three masses, the first two under the general-in-chief, marching down the Adige on both banks; the third, led by Quasdanovich, far away along the western shore of the Lake of Garda, the object of the combined movement being to surround and to overwhelm the enemy. But Würmser had to cope with a master of his art, full of genius and resource, prompt, active, and resolute. Instead of remaining bound to Mantua, Napoleon* instantly

* These admirable operations are perfectly explained in Napoleon's *Correspondance*, tome. i., 520. I have only space for a single sentence which sets forth Napoleon's conception. "Je sentis qu'il fallait adopter un plan vaste. L'ennemi en descendant du Tyrol par Brescia et l'Adige, me mettait au milieu: si mon armée était trop faible pour faire face aux deux divisions de l'ennemi, elle pouvait battre chacune d'elles séparément."

raised the siege, when aware of the real state of affairs; and, marching boldly against Quasdanovich, he fell upon his foe, while still without support, and forced him back, defeated in detail. The French, meanwhile, had been driven from the Mincio; but Würmser had divided his forces, at once seeking to reach Quasdanovich, and to make sure of the prize of Mantua; Napoleon assailed the masses when apart, and the Austrian chief was beaten, at Lonato first, and then at Castiglione, with decisive results.

Napoleon ere long had advanced against his beaten enemies, moving on both shores of the Lake of Garda, in the confidence of the moral power of success, and a magnificent passage of arms followed. Würmser, a daring and tenacious soldier, had resolved again to descend on Mantua; marching from the Tyrol to the Lower Adige, he hoped to close on the rear of the French, while distant from the now open fortress; and he had left Davidovich to oppose Napoleon, while he was attempting, himself, the decisive movement. But Davidovich was defeated at the entrance of the hills; he was kept in check by a few thousand men; Napoleon turned in pursuit against his chief adversary, and Würmser was caught in the defiles of the Brenta, defeated, with enormous loss, at Bassano, and driven, once more routed, far east of the Adige. The position of the veteran seemed hopeless; a victorious adversary pressed his rear, French garrisons held the line of the river, and Napoleon thought he had his foe in his grasp. Würmser, however, contrived to effect the passage, and he ultimately made good his

way into Mantua, having crushed some feeble detachments in his path. His army, nevertheless, had been well-nigh destroyed; a handful of men, far away in the Tyrol, and some thousands shut up in Mantua, a burden, and hardly a support to the garrison, were the only remains of the noble force which had marched on the Adige, a few weeks before, in the pride and hope of superior strength.

October had come, and the victorious French had long surrounded Mantua and its imprisoned forces. But Austria would not acknowledge defeat; she had been successful in the war in Germany, and she once more resolved to strike hard for Italy. Davidovich still remained in the Tyrol; his force was raised to about eighteen thousand men, and an army perhaps fifty thousand strong, was given to Alvinzi, another old general, with directions to march to the Adige and Mantua. The immense strength of the line of the river, held by a great captain, and turned to the best advantage, seems not to have been understood at Vienna; and while Davidovich approached Verona, Alvinzi advanced across the Piave, widely separated from his distant lieutenant. Napoleon, on this occasion, left a large force round Mantua, and he had probably scarcely forty thousand men to oppose to the enemies converging in very superior numbers. The operations of the Austrians were, at first, successful; Davidovich forced back a hostile detachment sent to hold him in check, and drew near Verona; and Alvinzi fairly defeated Napoleon, in a murderous battle at Caldiero. The two commanders had now almost joined hands, and had they pressed

forward boldly they might, not improbably, have seized Verona, crossed the Adige, and changed the fortunes of the whole conflict, by the relief of Mantua, which would have set Würmser free.

Napoleon extricated himself from grave peril by extraordinary resource and military skill, and ultimately rolled back the tide of invasion. He marched out of Verona on the 14th of November, descended the Adige at night with his army, moving rapidly along the western bank, when, suddenly crossing the river again, and advancing along the dykes of Arcola, he approached the flank and even the rear of Alvinzi, and threatened to cut him off from Vicenza. A confused battle raged for three days; Alvinzi lost many thousand men, and though he retained his line of retreat, he was driven away from his main object, Verona. This compelled Davidovich at once to fall back; he was fiercely pursued, and fled into the Tyrol; and Napoleon stood once more on the Adige, in triumph. The effort of Austria had utterly failed, and it had cost her the flower of two armies.

The tenacity, which Austria has shown through her history, did not desert her even at this juncture. Her forces were largely increased by volunteers—the Empress embroidered the standards she gave—and Alvinzi was placed again at the head of an army of sixty-five thousand men. Mantua was, as always, his principal object; but his operations were different from those before Arcola; he advanced towards Verona by both banks of the Adige, while a lieutenant, Provera, made a wide eccentric march, in order to cross the river as it approached

NAPOLEON AT ARCOLA.
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the Po. Napoleon had about forty thousand troops, but he was again in a central position, between adversaries far apart; and as soon as he became aware of the movements made against him, he sent a detachment to keep Provera in check, and marched from Verona to the table-land of Rivoli, already occupied by part of his forces. Alvinzi was in greatly superior strength; he attacked confidently on the 14th of January; and he endeavoured to surround his foe on all sides, in the hope of making him lay down his arms. But in his march through the defiles of the hills, he had left four columns without their guns, and had crowded his whole artillery upon one column; another column was beyond the Adige; * and these faulty dispositions gave Napoleon a victory assured from the first and complete. The partial attacks of the Austrians at wide distances, made without the support of an essential arm, and of a reserve not on the decisive spot, were easily repelled by their well-placed enemies; and Alvinzi was driven into the Tyrol completely routed. Meanwhile Provera had crossed the Adige; but after the crushing defeat of Alvinzi, this only led to a fresh disaster; Napoleon hurried to Mantua and struck Provera down, and the supreme effort of Austria failed. The situation of the fortress was now hopeless, and Würmser—he held out to his last crust—surrendered Mantua to his youthful conqueror, who treated the gallant veteran with

* Napoleon's account of the battle of Rivoli is admirable and impartial. His criticisms on Alvinzi's errors are equally profound and accurate. *Commentaries*, tome i., p. 435, Ed. 1867.

chivalrous courtesy. Austria had lost her last possession in Italy, but this was an insignificant part of her losses. Three great armies had perished in the attempt to force Napoleon from the Adige, and the Monarchy was for the moment exhausted.

These extraordinary triumphs amazed Europe and sent a thrill of pride and delight through France. The Republic had baffled the League of the Continent before, and had even advanced to the Meuse and the Rhine, but she had now overrun and almost conquered Italy. Germany was to have been the chief seat of the war, but Napoleon had transformed the position of affairs; Austria had put forth her strength on the Adige, and she had been cruelly stricken in a series of defeats. A great military genius, too, had appeared, who, like one of the champions of romance, had overthrown every adversary in the lists; subordinates worthy of him had become known to fame, Masséna, before a proved soldier, Lannes, Murat, Augereau, Bessières, Marmont, Junot, the satellites of the rising sun of victory; and nothing seemed impossible to the army of Italy.

Yet the situation was full of difficulties, and even of dangers, to the young warrior, who had moved from the Var to the edge of the Tyrol, and had resolved to proceed on his path of conquest. The Archduke Charles, the hope of the Hapsburgs, had completely defeated Jourdan and Moreau, in operations which in skill and resource bore a faint resemblance to those of Napoleon; the French had been driven back to the Rhine, and Austria might yet

invade Italy and even wrest the peninsula from her enemy's grasp. In Italy, too, what Napoleon called "the war of principles" had led to a state of things of no little gravity to France and her armies. Rome, irritated by the rulers in Paris, was preaching a holy war against the godless Republic; Naples had set considerable forces on foot; Sardinia was indignant at her late defeats; the Lombards and the people of the petty States, which extended from the Po to the Tiber, were rising against detested masters, and were clamouring for independence and Italian liberty. The peninsula, in a word, from the Adige to Otranto, was more or less agitated by a growing conflict between an established order of things and new ideas which had begun to prevail; the domination of kings, of nobles, of priests, was threatened by a popular and a national movement, and this, Napoleon perceived, might become perilous, should the hostile forces come into collision. The greatest danger, however, was on the side of Venice, especially should he advance, as was his purpose, and carry the war into the heart of Austria. That Republic had continued to support his troops, and to appear neutral and even friendly, but she had secretly favoured his enemies all through, her aristocracy remained hostile, and events were occurring within her territories which might precipitate a fierce struggle and cause an explosion widespread and alarming. The ferment of opinion, which was stirring Italy, had reached Venice and her subject province; the nobles of the Terra Firma, long oppressed by the tyrants of the Lagoons, had begun to

shake the yoke; the people were rising from the Isonzo to the Po; and the Republic, instigated perhaps from Vienna, was collecting an army of mercenaries to maintain her power by the sword. Should a French army cross the Venetian Alps, this condition of affairs might obviously be perilous in the extreme.

The policy of Napoleon, at this juncture, carried out more fully and plainly the policy, the beginning of which we have already seen. The Directory still looked askance at him; but they bowed before his increasing power, and they ceased to cross him directly in Italy. He marched a small force into the Papal States; overthrew, in a moment, the sacerdotal levies, which were to make a La Vendée upon the Tiber; compelled the affrighted pontiff to sue for peace, and wrested from him the ill-ruled provinces which lay north of the Tuscan Apennines. The Treaty of Tolentino put an end, too, to the threats of Naples and other Italian Powers; and the vigour of these strokes checked the partisans of the old order throughout the peninsula. Napoleon, moreover, fulfilled the pledges he had given to Bologna and the neighbouring cities; and he formed a republic on the French type, not only in Bologna but in Reggio, Modena, and in part of the territories just ceded by the Pope. But he expressed profound reverence for Rome and her Court; he protected expatriated French priests, and even hinted that a time might come when France would be reconciled with the Holy See; and as for the new republic he made it no secret that it was to be merely a satellite

of France, a pawn on the board in the great game for Italy.

In other respects the attitude he assumed and his tendencies were even more significant. The Republic had become an ally of Spain; and Napoleon urged the Directory, having regard to the contest with Austria and to the interests of his own army and even to those of France, to make alliances in Italy absolutely opposed to the Revolutionary principles and faith. He insisted that it was the true policy of the hour, to apply to Genoa as a friend to secure his rear, and to induce the Court of Turin to consent to a treaty, and to send a contingent to the Adige in his aid; and these counsels sufficiently prove how ready he was to make common cause with monarchies and aristocracies, if there was anything to be gained, and what he really thought of Italian liberties. His language to Venice, if peremptory, was clear; he offered the Republic an alliance with France, and he would not even object to her frank neutrality. But he would soon march northward and attack Austria; he would not tolerate double-dealing and perfidy; he would not allow an insurrection to gather in his rear; above all he would visit with heavy penalties attempts to molest the troops he was about to leave behind; and he viewed the armaments of the aristocracy with dislike and suspicion.

The first spring—of 1797—was at hand, and Napoleon had his preparations made. The Directory had eluded his requests to make Genoa and Sardinia allies; but it had sent him a contingent of excellent

troops from the forces lately in the field in Germany. His army was perhaps sixty thousand strong; it had been the object of his untiring care; and fired as it was with enthusiastic ardour, its organisation complete, and all its needs supplied, it was an almost perfect instrument of war. The Archduke Charles was in command of the Austrian forces, but these were inferior, even in numbers, to their foes; they were largely composed of mere rude levies, and they had lost heart under the stress of misfortune.

It is unnecessary to enlarge on the unequal contest, though it was another illustration of Napoleon's skill. The French crossed the Tagliamento early in March, the Austrians fell back after a short engagement, and the invaders had soon passed from the plains of Friuli into the gorges and defiles of the Julian Alps. But the Archduke, compelled to obey instructions from Vienna, had inclined eastward, in order to cover the port of Trieste. This gave his adversary an immense advantage. Napoleon seized the pass of Tarvis in his path, and was soon in the Carinthian uplands, making for the Noric Alps and the Austrian capital. His opponent was beaten in a series of combats and driven beyond the mountain barrier. Napoleon concentrated his uniting forces, and further resistance became impossible. An armistice was signed in the first days of April; and the young conqueror, who had marched from the Var to the Drave, gazed from the heights of the Semring*

* It has been said that Vienna cannot be descried from the Semring. Sir A. Alison, who was on the spot, declares that it can. *Hist. of Europe*, vol. iv.. 43.

on the towers of Vienna extended before him and almost in his grasp. Except that he had not marched from the Tyrol to the Inn, but had taken a wider and more daring flight, he had exactly carried out the magnificent designs he had formed, two years before, at a desk in Paris.

The anticipations, meanwhile, of Napoleon had been realised in the Venetian Republic. The aristocracy had refused the alliance of France, taking refuge in a seeming neutrality; and as soon as their dreaded enemy was gone they put their mercenary Sclavonic troops in motion; the priesthood proclaimed war against French infidels; and Austrian commanders, who held the Tyrol, encouraged an outbreak, which, obviously, might delay and embarrass the hostile army, by disseminating false reports of French defeats. The subject cities and districts rushed to arms; Bergamo and Brescia were in revolt; the people of Lombardy gave the insurrection aid; and it was certainly not discouraged by the French detachments which protected the rear of the army. A savage and bloody civil war broke out; small bodies of French soldiers were cut off and slain; many of the troops in Verona were cruelly butchered in a rising deliberately planned and carried out; and the participation of the nobles with these atrocities seemed established by the murder of a French officer, a crime perpetrated amidst the lagoons, and apparently sanctioned by the Venetian Government. Napoleon's decision was at once formed: he despatched an envoy to the terrified Senate; declared war against "a per-

fidious State," without even a thought of the rulers at home; and, in a short time, had hurried from the Alps southwards, to compel Venice to accept the terms of a conqueror. The city might have made a protracted resistance, but its aristocracy was corrupt and effete; "arms fell," in Napoleon's words, "from their hands"; they yielded at once to his stern menaces; they were thrust aside by a new government, formed of the middle classes and called a republic, with institutions of the French type; and one of the oldest Powers of Europe ignominiously fell. The revolution was quickly accomplished in the Terra Firma and other dependencies; the Lion of St. Mark was replaced by trees of liberty; and a treaty was made with the nascent state, attesting, in ominous words, the domination of France, and the intentions of her representative on the spot. It plainly stipulated for the partition of Venetian territory, and for the cession of part of the Venetian fleet.

These startling events considerably delayed the negotiations which had begun with Austria, and events of the highest importance in France kept everything in suspense for months. The Directory, placed in office by the 13th Vendémiaire, held the reins of government with feeble hands. Jacobin energy was now a thing of the past; the rulers of France were beset by difficulties, especially by intense financial distress; the character of their rule was weak and uncertain; they were opposed by all the parties they had lately subdued, and they soon became divided among themselves. The elections,

under the new constitution, gave a majority against them in the legislative body; and Royalist partisans, led by Pichegru, a Republican general but a conspirator, the wealthy classes in Paris, which had been defeated in the revolt of the Sections, and a large following of Moderates, as they were called, combined in a movement to drive them from power.

All this ere long became known in Vienna; and the astute counsellors of the House of Hapsburg put off treating for a definite peace, in the hope that events might take a turn in which they might find safety and even success. The Directory, however, represented the Revolution and all that had been created by it; and when it had become apparent that the heads of the State were threatened by a league of dangerous factions, and that France and her interests were involved, the leaders of the army throughout the country drew together in general concert to uphold the government and to put an end to what they deemed wicked intrigues and treason. The movement was steadily watched by Napoleon, though he was not one of its principal authors; and when the fall of the Directory seemed probable, he sent two envoys to give them support in Paris; his resolve also being, perhaps, quickened by a violent invective against himself and his army uttered by a deputy, who descanted on the wrongs of Venice. The progress of events was now rapid. A large military force was marched into Paris, with the approval of Moreau, and even of Hoche, a chief strongly attached to constitutional rights; Augereau, one of the two envoys, was placed at its

head; the Chamber of the Legislature was shut up; a number of deputies were cast into prison, and several seats were declared vacant; Pichegru and other Royalists were sent into banishment; and even two of the Directors, including Carnot, illustrious for his conduct in 1793, were proscribed, on a charge that they had plotted against the State. The revolution of 18th Fructidor, the 4th of September, 1797, which marks another stage in the course of events that were bringing France under the rule of the sword, put an end for the present to the hopes of the Bourbons, reduced the factions of Paris to silence, proved a heavy blow to the cause of Austria, and greatly increased the strength of the government remodelled after the late *coup d'état*. It turned ultimately to Napoleon's advantage; but he certainly seems to have disapproved of its violence and its more extreme measures.

Meanwhile, during the period between the truce made with Austria, and the 18th Fructidor, Napoleon had remained in Italy, at the head of affairs. He inhabited palaces of Milan and Venice, wielded a power that the proudest kings might have envied, summoned Joséphine to grace more than royal progresses, and received the homage of obsequious envoys and of multitudes which hailed him as the hope of Italy. The negotiations with Austria, retarded as they were, dragged on slowly, and require a word of notice. Some months previously, Clarke, a diplomatist, known afterwards as a leading man of the Empire, had been sent, in appearance, to treat

for peace but really as a spy on Napoleon, but he had yielded to the spell of the conqueror; the deputies of the Republic had also left the army, and Napoleon directed and controlled every thing.

The great object of France was to obtain Belgium, and the western bank of the Rhine, already conquered, but not ceded; and to secure this object she was perfectly willing to find Austria compensation in Italian conquests. Napoleon concurred in these views, and for some time he adhered to a project to give Austria a part of the Terra Firma of Venice, reducing the Republic almost to the lagoons, but indemnifying Venice with part of the territories of the Pope, which, as we have seen, had been lately made, with Reggio and Modena, a republic in themselves. Simultaneously Lombardy, Reggio, and Modena were to be formed into a new republic; and this arrangement, though chiefly proposed in the interests of France and for military ends, would have left Venice an independent state, although largely deprived of power. But the democratic government set up in Venice proved itself to be nearly as hostile to France as the fallen aristocracy had been. Napoleon, too, seems to have regarded the people of Venice with even more contempt than the populations of other parts of Italy, which he had flattered, indeed, but despised at heart; and he gradually made up his mind to let Venice perish, and to hand over her spoils to Austria, reserving her fleet and the Ionian Islands for France.* This

* The opinion entertained by Napoleon of Venice, and of the Italians generally, is unequivocally expressed in his correspondence

resolution, it is but just to remark, was formed slowly and with reluctance; it was largely due to the persistent refusal of the Directory to make an ally of Sardinia, and to secure her aid should the war be renewed; and it was communicated to the Directory long before Fructidor.

In this state of affairs, the new government of France, in the confidence of augmented power, or possibly from a higher motive, requested Napoleon not to cede Venice, though war with Austria should be the consequence. We may accept his account of his subsequent conduct; it is confirmed by hostile but trustworthy evidence. It is idle to suppose that he had not a passionate wish to close his triumphs by making a glorious peace; and this was legitimate, not mere selfish ambition.* But winter was even now at hand; the French army on the Rhine was not ready, and Augereau, its new chief, in Napoleon's judgment was not equal to a great command; the forces of Austria had been concentrated against his own army, which had not been strengthened; and Venice was not worth the sacrifice of thousands of French lives amidst the passes and snows of the Alps. After long disputes with the Austrian envoys peace was made, nearly on the same conditions as those which had been discussed before.

By the Treaty of Campo Formio, signed in October, 1797, Austria fulfilled the pledges she had

at this time. Tome ii., p. 501; iii., 400. Contempt and scorn could not go further.

* *Commentaries*, tome ii., 113. Ed. 1867.

already given; and, subject to the assent of the German Empire, France acquired the coveted frontier of the Rhine, and she gained the Low Countries to the mouths of the Scheldt, the object of her aspirations during two centuries. France gave Austria Venice, and the whole Terra Firma, except the district west of the Adige; and an enlarged Republic, called the Cisalpine, composed of Reggio, Modena, of part of the States of the Pope, and of the important province of Lombardy received, in addition, this strip of territory. Venice, which Napoleon had wished to preserve, in part at least, was thus blotted from the map; a French admiral had already taken her fleet, and held Corfu, the chief of her Ionian Islands; and the purpose of the conqueror is expressed in a phrase left on record by his secretary on the spot—"Venice shall pay for the expenses of the war,* and the boundary of the Rhine; let the Directory and the lawyers say what they will." The policy of Napoleon in these arrangements is strikingly characteristic and cannot be left out of sight. He abandoned Venice to Austria, in order to throw an apple of discord among the old Powers of Europe, which would feel indignant that one of themselves should have compassed the ruin of an aristocratic state; and he set up the Cisalpine Republic, as an ally depending on France for existence, and a real check, in Italy, on the designs of Austria. One incident in the negotiations was significant: the Austrian plenipotentiary protested against the distribution of the provinces beyond the Adige. Napoleon

* Bourrienne, vol. i., 96. Ed. 1885.

dashed a vase on the ground, saying*: "I will break your monarchy, as I have broken this"†; and diplomacy bowed to the argument of force.

In setting the Directory's will at naught and sacrificing Venice to make peace, Napoleon showed a conqueror's scorn of the authority of the state in a revolutionary time, and his conduct was without scruple or pity. But some pleas may be fairly urged for a policy of ambition and hard state-craft: he was already more than half pledged to Austria; a renewal of the war would be perilous; he consulted the obvious interests of France; and Venice had proved implacably hostile, and had plainly shown that her new liberties would not make her a useful ally. Those who denounce Napoleon as a cold-blooded Attila, and compare the fall of Venice to the partition of Poland, miss the truth in their extravagant rhetoric. The whole transaction was not below the political morality of the eighteenth century; and it was less dishonourable, for a single instance, than the shameless betrayal of the Catalans, by the allies, before the Peace of Utrecht.

He gave a finishing hand to the affairs of Italy before taking his departure for France. The fall of Venice had led to the fall of the aristocracy long supreme in Genoa; a popular revolution had followed, and he checked and repressed its licentious anarchy. He was also selected as an arbiter in a dispute between two of the Swiss cantons; he

* *Commentaries*, tome ii., 120. Ed. 1867.

† This has been denied; but Napoleon positively states he used the words in dispute.

joined the Valteline to the Cisalpine Republic; and he looked in, so to speak, at the Congress of Rastadt, then in session, and discussing the terms made at Campo Formio, as they concerned the Empire. Napoleon reached Paris in the first days of December; he was greeted with an enthusiasm that knew no bounds, was the object of popular honour and applause at festivals resembling in aspect and pomp the magnificence of an Imperial triumph at Rome, and received the homage of the Directory and of the Bodies of the State. The young conqueror, however, whether because a self-concentrated nature disliked the crowd, or more probably because far-reaching ambition deemed seclusion a means of attaining fortune, maintained a reserved and cautious attitude. He seemed to stand aloof from all parties, and he received the flattery of the multitude with polite indifference. He dropped one significant phrase only—"France," he said, in reply to a public address, "required a better political system."

Napoleon had given proofs of extraordinary powers in the memorable events of 1796–97. His achievements in war had been astonishing; his military conceptions had been grand, original, and scientific alike; his execution of them had been marked by daring, unfailing resource, readiness, energy, and skill. Deeply versed in the history of the noblest of arts, he had naturally followed its unchanging principles; but he had set himself free from what was merely obsolete, and he had turned new conditions to the very best advantage. He had become the herald of a revolution in war; and

his power of combination, his quickness of movement, his vigour, had baffled and terrified generals, who could not rise beyond the traditions of the past. His political insight, too, had been very striking: his perception that Austria once subdued would leave France virtually supreme in Italy, his accurate estimate of the state of opinion and sentiment in the peninsula, and his clear views as to domestic affairs in France reveal an intelligence of a superior kind and give token of a coming statesman. His conduct had been marked by ambition all through, and even by a keen regard to self, though he had laboured to promote the welfare of France; he had been unscrupulous and harsh at times, and the sacrifice of Venice cannot be justified. Yet history will look at other qualities of Napoleon at present more clearly prominent. From his tent beside the Po or the Adige he had shaped, to a great extent, the fortunes of France; he had changed the propaganda of the Revolution into a policy of calculation and state-craft; he had made alliances depend on interest and not on sympathy with the rights of man; he had offered friendship to states and rulers without regard to their forms of government; he had been indifferent to claims on popular liberty, and had put democratic licence down; and he had shown to the representatives of foreign Powers that, possessing, as he did, enormous power, he had reverence for the old system of Europe. A youthful soldier had surpassed the exploits of the greatest captains of the ancient monarchy, and of its ablest and most successful

statesmen and had largely transformed Revolutionary France. The times even now showed that Revolutionary France, already yielding to the rule of the sword, would find in Napoleon a future master.

CHAPTER III.

Napoleon is appointed to the command of the "Army of England"—The project of a descent abandoned—The expedition to Egypt—Battle of the Pyramids—Battle of the Nile—Occupation of Egypt by the French—Coalition against France—Reverses of the French armies in Italy and Swabia—Foreign policy of the French Directory—Their domestic policy—Their decline and unpopularity—Invasion of Syria by the French—Siege of Acre—Napoleon returns to France—Battle of Zurich—Combination of all parties to place him in power—The 18th Brumaire—Napoleon's conduct on this occasion.

F the great Coalition of 1793, formed to overthrow Revolutionary France, one power only remained in arms, and Napoleon, soon after his return to Paris, was given the command of an army intended to make a descent on the shores of England. He passed from Boulogne to Calais and Dunkirk, and with characteristic attention to details examined everything that was being prepared for transporting an army across the Channel. The recent failure, however, of Bantry Bay and the decisive victory of Camperdown were ominous warn-

ings that boded evil; England had the command of the narrow seas, and after a calculation of the resources of France he pronounced the attempt, for the present, hopeless. His mind, in fact, had for some time been brooding upon another enterprise, more promising perhaps, but even more ambitious. Like Alexander he had looked toward the East—the mysterious region of fabulous conquest. This may have been the impulse which before had led him to try to seek fortune in the land of Islam; and Venice* and the associations that belonged to it had opened to him a grand perspective of empire beyond the Erythræan Sea. He now sought to assail England—he had marked her out as the chief foe of France—in a way that he deemed more certain and safe than hazardous and direct invasion, and that offered him a theatre for dazzling exploits. His eyes had already been fixed on Malta, and he proposed to seize and occupy Egypt, a conquest which would not only secure a colony to France of the first order, but would gravely imperil British commerce and would be a stage on the road to invade India. The Directory accepted the attractive project; it was less dangerous than has been supposed, for England had not, for some time, ruled

* Napoleon's designs against Malta and Egypt and his animosity to England are fully expressed in letters written from the neighborhood of Venice in 1797. *Correspondance*, tome iii., 293, 392. There is only space for a few words of quotation. "Pourquoi ne nous emparerons pas de l'île de Malte? . . . Il faudrait nous emparer de l'Egypte. . . . Il faut que notre gouvernement détruise la monarchie anglicane, ou il doit s'attendre lui-même à être détruit par la corruption et les intrigues des ces actifs insulaires."

the Mediterranean through her fleets; and Napoleon, masking his real design, directed the assembly of ships of war, of large convoys, of an immense material, and of considerable bodies of troops drawn together from the old army of Italy—in short, made preparations for a descent on the Nile from towns in the northern provinces of France. As probably had been the case before, the Directory certainly in this instance gave him his command to keep him away from France, and sent him to a splendid kind of banishment. They were overpowered by Napoleon's presence; they were not deceived by his retiring modesty; they had angrily resented his condemnation of a barbarous pageant that preserved the memory of the tragic death of Louis XVI.; and they were convinced his purpose was to thrust them from their uneasy seats. They insisted on his departure, when, in view of dangers already threatening France, he had wished to keep the expedition back.

The French armament was despatched from Toulon, in the third week of May, 1798. The fleet consisted of thirteen sail of the line—one, the *Orient*, the finest war-ship afloat; there was a multitude of frigates and smaller vessels; and the army numbered about thirty thousand men, in part convoyed from different ports of Italy. Napoleon had some of his old lieutenants with him; Kléber and Desaix, two most distinguished soldiers of the armies of the Rhine and of the Sambre and Meuse, followed in the train of the chief of Rivoli; and many of the most illustrious learned men of France, names of

high renown in the arts of peace, accompanied the expedition as pioneers of the civilisation to be built up in Egypt. The fleet and its attendants had soon reached Malta, covering the Mediterranean with three hundred sails; and Napoleon proceeded at once to accomplish the audacious design he had formed at Venice. The Knights of St. John, famous in the days of the Crusades, now faint shadows of the feudalism of the past, laid down their arms after a brief parley; and a great fortress, of such formidable strength that it was wittily said "it was a piece of good luck that there was some one within to open the gates," surrendered with hardly a show of resistance.

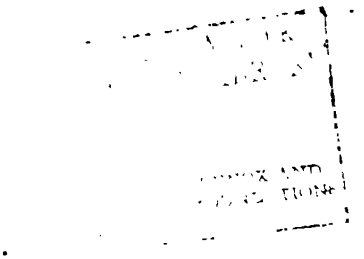
The armament was ere long on the Libyan Sea, unconscious that a dreaded foe was at hand, and on the last day of June the antique towers and ruins of Alexandria rose in sight from the wastes of the sea and the adjoining desert. The intelligence quickly spread that an English fleet under Nelson, already an heroic name, had been off the coast but a few hours before. Napoleon ordered his troops to be landed forthwith, and a few thousand men had soon reached the shore and were moving along the narrow isthmus which divides the Mediterranean from the great adjoining lake. Alexandria fell after a short contest, and Napoleon, leaving Kléber in the place and sending a flotilla to the western mouth of the Nile, pushed across the desert by forced marches, his object being to attain Cairo and to take possession of the chief town of Egypt. The movement, under a burning sun and across sandy expanses,

was difficult in the extreme, but the army and the flotilla soon came in contact, and the invaders advanced along the great river,—a brief skirmish, in which Napoleon's infantry had easily defeated the Mameluke horsemen, having highly elated the French soldiery. On the 21st of July the vast array of the splendid cavalry of Mourad Bey, the head of the warlike Mameluke chiefs, was seen covering the plains near Cairo, the Pyramids towered in the near distance, and a great entrenched camp spread along the banks of the Nile, protecting the Mameluke armed serfs on foot. "Think," Napoleon exclaimed, as, with impassioned gesture, he pointed to the majestic structures of the past, "that forty generations look down from these heights!" The enthusiastic soldiery caught up his words, and they marched to the battle with joyful confidence. The fierce charges of the devoted horsemen broke idly against the serried squares of veterans inured to European warfare; Mourad and his ruined squadrons fled from the plain, and the entrenched camp was stormed amidst a scene of carnage. The victors had entered Cairo within a few days.

A disaster, fatal at first sight and ultimately leading to immense results, befell the expedition after a short time. The British squadron, observing Toulon, was too weak to prevent the departure of the great French fleet; but Nelson was reinforced by ten ships, in addition to three he had before, and he was ere long in pursuit of his enemy. As we have seen, he just missed the hostile armament, but he thought that Syria was the object of

NAPOLEON AT THE PYRAMIDS.

FROM THE PAINTING BY GROS IN THE GALLERY AT VERSAILLES.



the French, and having sailed from Alexandria to the Levant, he put into Syracuse, and thence made for Coron, returning to the Morea, after a most determined chase. He heard there, at last, where his enemy was, and on the 1st of August, 1798, his sails were descried from the low downs of Aboukir, a headland not far from Alexandria. The French fleet was moored on the roads hard by; its admiral, Brueys, had been unable or unwilling to comply with Napoleon's orders to enter the harbor of Alexandria, or to leave the coast and retire to Corfu; and he had placed his ships at anchor in a long line, at a little distance from the shore only, but without the protection of batteries on the land. Nelson seized the occasion with the power of genius; he steered inshore of the enemy's front, and attacked it at the same time seawards, and he had soon brought the van and centre of Brueys under a cross-fire of overwhelming force.* The French made a stern but useless resistance; the magnificent *Orient* blew up near midnight, and at noon on the 2d two ships crawled away, the only remains of thirteen men-of-war, all the rest having been destroyed or captured, in the most scientific of battles at sea.

This crushing defeat severed at one stroke the communications of the French with Europe, imprisoned Napoleon within his conquest, and it might well have appeared from the first decisive. But Egypt had already been nearly occupied, and

* Whether Captain Foley or Nelson directed this manœuvre may be questioned, but Nelson as Admiral has the responsibility and the glory.

the great captain in command at Cairo was equal to an emergency that appalled his army. Napoleon had played on the hopes and the fears of the Arab population, the chief race of Egypt; he had caressed Sheik elders and august *muftis;* he had denounced the Mamelukes as his only enemies; and these arts, aided by the stern repression of a rising at Cairo, had for the present reduced the country to complete submission. Always great in administration, he began to lay the foundations of what he hoped to make a noble colonial possession of France. He established factories to supply the wants of his army, built mills, and set up a press and a mint, and successfully employed the learned men who had followed the expedition in sedulous efforts to develop the wealth and resources of Egypt. Canals were planned to diffuse the waters of the Nile, and to spread plenty over barren wastes; experiments of all kinds were tried to encourage the products of Europe to grow in a land admirably fitted for them; careful and extensive surveys were made to promote agriculture, and all that belongs to it; and engineers were instructed to ascertain the levels between the Mediterranean and the Red Seas. The world owes to Napoleon, in the first instance, the conception of the noble waterway which has thrown the barrier of the Isthmus down, and has brought the East and the West together, in the ancient land of the long vanished Pharaohs.

The French, however, had scarcely settled in Egypt before a series of events occurred in Europe which changed the whole situation of affairs in

France, annihilated the results of her late triumphs, and placed her in extreme peril abroad and at home. The attitude of the Directory since the 18th Fructidor had been aggressive to foreign powers; they resented Napoleon's arts of compromise, and did not like Campo Formio at heart, and they endeavoured once more to make use of the revolutionary faith to extend their influence. Before the expedition had left Toulon, Genoa had become the Ligurian Republic, French troops had expelled the Pope from Rome, had invaded Switzerland in the name of liberty, and had made a second Fructidor in Holland; and the Roman, the Helvetian, and the Batavian Republics had, like the Cisalpine, sprung into being, and, fashioned after their great original, had placed themselves under the protection of France.

The splendid victory of Nelson, known as the Nile, soon precipitated and enlarged the sphere of the conflict, evidently already imminent, between the Revolution and old Europe. The capture of Malta and the invasion of Egypt caused Russia and the Turks to join hands, and to declare war against the French Republic; Austria seized the occasion of Napoleon's absence and of the evident danger of his distant army to draw the sword and to strike with effect; she received the aid of three-fourths of the Empire; and England, treated with contempt by the rulers in Paris during recent negotiations which had proved abortive, gave the Coalition her powerful support. In the first months of 1799 hostilities raged along an immense front, extending from the Zuider Zee to the Tiber; and the reverses

of France were swift and appalling. Masséna indeed held his own in Switzerland, the King of Sardinia fled from Piedmont, and a premature effort of the Court of Naples enabled a French army to enter the capital and to set up a Parthenopean Republic. But the Archduke Charles defeated Jourdan in Swabia; a combined Russian and Austrian army overran Italy from the Adige to the Tanaro; the French were compelled to abandon Naples, and their beaten forces, in their attempts to unite, were routed on the Trebbia and at Novi; the Cisalpine Republic vanished like a dream, and all Napoleon's conquests were suddenly lost. By the middle of the year two great hostile masses were approaching Provence and threatening Alsace; France seemed unable to arrest their progress, and there can be little doubt that, had the Allies made at this juncture a well-combined effort, they might have attained decisive success, as had been possible in 1793. As it was, the Republic appeared sinking under the weight of foes in overwhelming strength, and Masséna's little force, cooped up among the Alps, seemed already lost amidst the mighty flood of war and invasion spreading all round.

France, meanwhile, in her internal state had been exhibiting the disorganisation, the weakness, the anarchy which attend misgovernment, the strife of factions, and deep-seated ills in the frame of society. The Directory, after the 18th Fructidor, had oppressed the moderate and wealthy classes and had been cruel to *émigrés* and nonjuring priests; it next turned against the surviving Jacobins,

and vainly endeavoured to keep them down; and it contrived to annul the elections of extreme Republicans to the legislative body by fraud and violence. The policy of "see-saw," as it was contemptuously called, united all parties against the tottering government; and three of the directors were driven from power by a *coup d'état* effected by the two Councils—known as the Ancients and the Five Hundred—which composed the new-born Parliament of France. Their places were filled in defiance of law; in the conflict between the Legislature and the executive power, the Constitution became a wreck; and the impotence of the State was made further manifest by the hostility of the chiefs of the armies—exasperated at attempts made by the Directory to restrain excesses and depredations before sanctioned,—by national bankruptcy now scarcely concealed, by intrigues of Royalists, priests, and *émigrés*, and by the prevalence of increasing disorder and crime.

The great reverses of 1799 quickened these elements of confusion and peril, and hurried on a crisis perhaps already certain. The renewal of the war had been unpopular, and its disastrous experiences provoked discontent and irritation far spread and alarming. Large and unjust taxes were extorted from the rich to support the shattered and defeated armies; the Conscription, recently made law, was denounced as ruinous and cruel tyranny; the creditors of the State were left penniless; the pressure of calamity stirred to wrath a nation rudely awakened from dreams of glory. Meanwhile La Vendée had

lifted its head and threatened once more to convulse the West; evil scenes of the Reign of Terror reappeared in brigandage, lawlessness, and feuds of class; and desperate men of the Revolution, rising again, clamoured for the energy of 1793, and tried to compel the Directory to put in motion the tremendous machinery of universal violence worked by the Committee of Public Safety. France was angry, terrified, and in a dangerous mood; and in this state of things all that was sound, moderate, law-abiding, and eager for rest in the nation, sighed for the establishment of a strong government that would make peace and save France from anarchy. This, too, was the wish of the army and its heads; and the contemned Directory struggled in vain to steer the vessel of the State in an overwhelming tempest. Sieyès, one of the ruling Junta, a celebrated name in 1789–91, dropped the words "we must have a brain and a sword"; and there is reason to believe that efforts were made to elude the vigilance of the British squadrons and to bring Napoleon back from Egypt to France.

While dangers were thus encompassing France, Napoleon, ignorant of her existing state, had been extending her power in Egypt. Desaix had attained the Cataracts of the Nile, and had pursued Mourad Bey to the verge of the desert; and the ascendancy of the French appeared established from Alexandria to the south of the Isthmus. Meanwhile Napoleon had proceeded in the work of organising and subduing the country; he administered it through its old functionaries, and he gained the sympathy of

the Arabs at least, by ostentatious reverence for their rites and customs and by offering homage to the True Prophet.

All this, no doubt, was policy and craft, but Napoleon was not a reckless scoffer who mocked at religion as superstitious folly, and treated it like a show at a theatre. The offspring of a bad revolutionary time, he was not a pious or a scrupulous man, but his intelligence was of too high a kind not to see the Divine in the order of things, and, like all great rulers of men, he understood the importance of religion as a moderating force, and of its institutions as bulwarks of the State. From the deck of the *Orient* he had pointed to the stars and rebuked the atheism of Parisian *philosophes;* his imagination, one of his most distinctive faculties, soared to the heights of the Unknown God; he loved to dwell upon Moses and Mahomet, great leaders, who had achieved wonders by appeals to faith in the Most High; he saw in the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth a prodigious influence on the estate of men; and he recognised in the Church of his fathers a marvel of organisation, and a most potent instrument to uphold order and to maintain authority. His policy in Egypt as regards Mecca was in the main prompted by the same motives as his better policy, as regards Rome, which restored her fallen altars to France, and, notwithstanding the gibes of satirists, it exhibited real insight and wisdom.

The intelligence, however, which ere long reached him, that the Porte had declared war against France, and that two Turkish armies were on their way to

Egypt, compelled him to abandon the work in his hands, and, after his wont, he resolved to attack his enemies while still widely divided. He set off for Syria, in February, 1799, with an army of about thirteen thousand men; and his imagination, fired by the visions of the East, created vast designs of collecting myriads of auxiliaries in his conquering path, of marching to the Indus from the Euphrates, or of reaching Constantinople through Asia Minor, and, in his own phrase, "taking Europe in reverse." One tragic incident occurred in his advance—he ordered the execution of about two thousand Turks, made prisoners after the surrender of Jaffa; the plea that they had broken faith at El Arysh cannot stand the test of impartial inquiry, and the deed has left a stain on his name, though unhappily soldiers of European races have been too often merciless in Asiatic warfare. Towards the close of March he sate down before Acre; his operations were impeded by a British squadron; the place made a determined resistance, and Napoleon raised the siege in the third week of May, saying that "a grain of sand had caused grand projects to fall." He wasted the country pitilessly on his retreat, having routed the Turks in many encounters; but the assertion that he proposed to destroy by poison unhappy soldiers seized by the plague is certainly an unfounded calumny. On his return to Egypt he received the news that the second Turkish army had been disembarked; he marched against it with characteristic energy, and it was overthrown and driven into the sea not far from the scene of the defeat of Brueys.

At this juncture, a mere accident made Napoleon aware of the condition of France and of the reverses that had befallen her arms. He instantly resolved to return to Europe and to brave the indefatigable English cruisers, and it is puerile and absurd to condemn his conduct. He was already anxiously expected in France, her enemies in Egypt had been crushed, his army was about twenty-two thousand strong and occupied nearly the whole country, and his presence was required on the great stage of events. He set off from the shores of Africa near the end of August, 1799, having transferred his command to Kléber. The voyage was tedious and perilous in the extreme, for his weak flotilla of four small vessels had to pass through the midst of the English fleets, but Fortune smiled on her daring favourite, and he had reached the coasts of Provence in October. In an instant he was on his way to the capital, and whether he threaded the defiles of Dauphiné or traversed the shouting ways of Lyons, he was greeted with an enthusiasm that knew no bounds, as the hope of France, and her sure Deliverer.

On his arrival in Paris he found France in a position, abroad, of less danger than had been the case when he set sail from Egypt. The Coalition had missed the occasion; they had divided their forces on the theatre of war; instead of directly invading France the Archduke Charles had been despatched to the Lower Rhine, to co-operate with the Duke of York, who was making a feeble attack on the Netherlands; and Suvóroff had abandoned

Italy to assail Masséna, still standing firmly on the defence in Switzerland. In this state of affairs, the Archduke had done nothing; the Duke of York ignominiously failed; and Masséna, with admirable energy and skill, had fallen on Korsakoff, the enemy in his front, had won a decisive battle near Zürich, and had compelled Suvóroff to effect his retreat, with terrible loss, through the passes of the Alps. France had been saved, at least for the time; but her armies had all but lost Italy, she was still menaced by the allied hosts, she was still the prey of anarchy and strife at home, and Napoleon received in Paris the universal acclaim which had welcomed him on his way through the provinces.

For a few days he withdrew himself into seclusion, as he had done before; but this attitude had become impossible, and ambition no longer required a mask. The obsequious Directory licked his hand, concealing a hatred they feared to show; with scarcely an exception, the generals, on the spot, rallied round the chief who towered over them all; and even the violent Republicans were not unwilling to see a Dictator at the head of affairs. But the most powerful supporters of Napoleon were the moderate, wealthy, and orderly citizens, who feared Jacobinism, and despised the government; the rising intellect of Paris, too, and, even the multitude, were on his side; and France, in fact, declared with no uncertain voice, that the warrior of 1796 was required to lead her armies again, and that the strong hand alone of her most successful soldier could rescue her from the depths of misfortune and from the state of dis-

order and weakness into which she had fallen of late.

In this state of opinion the existing government of France was doomed, and could not long endure. But the Constitution of the year III. survived, the Directory held the reins of power, the Councils of the Ancients and of the Five Hundred formed the Legislature and had very great influence, and it was no easy matter to effect a change in an order of things for some time established without a violent revolution, that might convulse the country and aggravate all the dangers at hand. Though Sieyès, too, by many degrees the most able of the Five Directors, had acknowledged that it had become necessary to create a stronger and more united government, and even to transform the institutions of France, he aimed at being the real head of the State; and he stood angrily aloof from Napoleon, when it had become apparent that France was turning to Napoleon as the ruler of her choice. But Napoleon and Sieyès, though with different objects, agreed that a complete change was required in the government and the political structure of France; they had strong common interests, too, that brought them together, and through the influence of Talleyrand, already known as the most eminent of the diplomatists of France, and of other leaders of the class of the Moderates, a reconciliation was effected between the rivals, who, in fact, felt that each could assist the other.

The purpose of Napoleon and Sieyès now was to overturn the Directory, and to subvert the Consti-

tution, and all that belonged to it, as quietly as possible and without recourse to violence; and, aided by his colleague, Napoleon formed a plan of operations, which strikingly shows how he could exhibit, in the domain of politics, the skill in stratagem in which he was pre-eminent in war. The threatening remains of the Terrorist faction were dreaded and hated alike in Paris; Sieyès was all-powerful among the Ancients, and had a considerable following in the Five Hundred; and though these bodies had begun to fear Napoleon, he had the army at his back and five-sixths of the capital. In these circumstances it was arranged that Paris was to be alarmed with a report of a widespread Jacobin plot and rising; Sieyès was to inform the Ancients of this, and to obtain a vote from them, as the law allowed, to transfer the whole Legislature to St. Cloud; and Napoleon calculated that, in this remote spot, the two Councils could be induced, by persuasion, or, if necessary, by force, to consent, in view of the peril of the State, to a revolution in the existing government. To carry out his purpose he had made sure of the leaders of the army and of the troops in Paris; he relied, too, on his own commanding influence; and in order to make the transfer of power more easy, it was agreed that Sieyès, and his creature, Ducos, should resign their offices as Directors, and paralyse the Executive at the decisive moment. No provision was made for the future order of things which was to take the place of the old in France, and this was designedly done by Napoleon; he had from the first resolved to be himself supreme.

The *coup d'état*, planned in this way, was to take place on the 18th Brumaire, the 9th of November, 1799. The success of its projectors was, at first, more complete than they had themselves expected. Vague rumours of a Terrorist plot were disseminated through the alarmed capital; Fouché, the head of the police, an unenviable name, having received a hint to spread the intelligence; and the Ancients, at the instance of Sieyès, holding a sitting, on the 8th, with closed doors, at night, pronounced a decree that the two Councils should repair to St. Cloud to deliberate there on the grave danger that threatened the State. At the same time, setting the law at nought, with an obsequiousness which revealed the state of opinion, they voted Napoleon to the supreme command of all the military force in or near Paris; and, as far as they could, they sanctioned his use of the power of the sword already in his hands. The Five Hundred obeyed with hardly a protest, reassured by the soft words of Lucien Bonaparte, their president, but one of Napoleon's brothers; and they took their departure to St. Cloud without a show of suspicion. Meanwhile, Napoleon had drawn together large bodies of troops from different parts of the city; he harangued the soldiers and addressed their chiefs; he found docile followers in the superior officers, and, accompanied by an enthusiastic concourse of citizens hailing the rising sun, he took precautions to prevent the tottering government from making an attempt to assert their authority. The palace of the Directory was occupied by armed men, with Moreau, the known Republican chief, at their

head,—one of Napoleon's most dexterous strokes; Sieyès and Ducos, as had been arranged, deserted their colleagues and left their posts; Barras, another of the Five, the old patron of Napoleon in 1794–1795, a waiter on fortune, corrupt and worthless, was persuaded or compelled to resign; and the honourable resistance of Moulins and Gohier, the two remaining Directors, proved, of course, futile. By the evening Napoleon appeared master of the situation beyond recall; Paris, made, by the Revolution, the Dictator of France, had declared for him with a unanimous voice; the co-operation of the army had been always certain; the government had vanished, unwept and dishonoured; and he had, he thought, but to march to St. Cloud to obtain the assent of the Councils to all that he pleased. He was so confident in the result of the enterprise that he refused to listen to Sieyès, who urged him to arrest the most daring and passionate spirits of the Five Hundred assembled at St. Cloud.

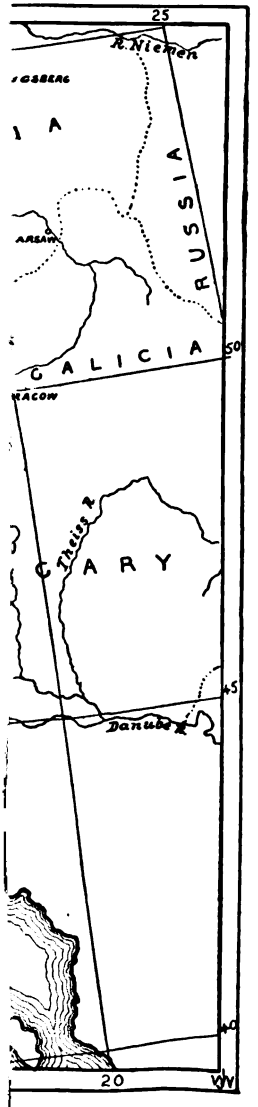
All had gone on smoothly up to this point of time; but revolution has many turns, and the *coup d'état* very nearly failed. Napoleon marched to St. Cloud at the head of his troops, followed by applauding thousands from Paris, on the morning of the 10th, the 19th Brumaire, and the task before him seemed perfectly easy. But there was a minority, in the Ancients, opposed to Sieyès; the Five Hundred clung to the Constitution, for their position in the State depended upon it; and both Councils, beginning to perceive that they had been removed, by a trick, from Paris, were irritated, sus-

picious, and full of distrust. An unexpected delay caused passionate debates, and despite the efforts of Lucien Bonaparte, the Five Hundred carried a vote to maintain the institutions of France unchanged, and ratified this by a solemn oath. Napoleon, meantime, had presented himself at the bar of the Ancients, with his staff hard by; he was naturally embarrassed when asked to explain the circumstances of a supposed conspiracy, which had been devised for the occasion only; but he recovered his composure, when he dwelt with emphasis on the collapse of the settlement of the year III., destroyed by successive acts of violence, and he received the thanks of the half-convinced Assembly.

It was altogether otherwise when he appeared before the Five Hundred to carry out his purpose. The Council had worked itself to a pitch of fierce excitement; shouts of "down with the tyrant" rang out on all sides; a cry went forth, "put an end to the outlaw," the cry once fatal to Robespierre; and little doubt can exist that, like other soldiers versed in the experience of material force, but perplexed when confronted by moral power, Napoleon hesitated, was baffled, nay, even quailed. He was carried out of the Assembly by a knot of his soldiers, and Lucien, who had tried to check the torrent of fury, disappeared, exclaiming that the sitting was at an end, and throwing away the robes of his office. Napoleon's presence of mind at once returned; he addressed the troops in indignant language; a file of grenadiers entered the hall of the Council, and the terrified members scattered in flight. A Rump of

the creatures of Sieyès and Napoleon was brought together again to declare the extinction of the constitution of a few years before, and to inaugurate a Provisional Government, and the Ancients sanctioned all that had been done. The army and the crowds at St. Cloud hailed the *coup d'état* with expressions of delight; Paris loudly echoed the universal sentiment, and France joyfully welcomed her coming master.

The pre-eminence of Napoleon in war, was not conspicuously seen in Egypt and Syria. He routed the Mamelukes and the Ottoman hordes, but these foes were not worthy of his steel, and he was baffled and discomfited at the siege of Acre. Unquestionably, too, he underrated the power of England on her own element; and though he effected the descent on Egypt when Nelson's Mediterranean squadron was weak, he might have anticipated that a Battle of the Nile would isolate his army and cut it off from France. If he really contemplated the gigantic designs of a march to the Indus, or on Constantinople—and at St. Helena he said that these were possible—it is certain, from the state of our present knowledge, that either project must have completely failed, and in these vast plans of conquest we begin to see the over-confidence and the imaginative excess, which were his most striking faults as a warrior, and which he had not exhibited in the campaigns of Italy, where he was confronted usually by a superiority of force. The most remarkable passage in this phase of his career is certainly the *coup d'état* of the 18th Brumaire, and many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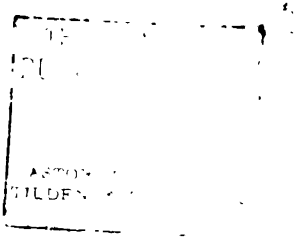

conflicting judgments have been pronounced upon it. His conduct, no doubt, was marked by deception; he lured the Councils to St. Cloud by an ignoble trick, and he barely escaped the vengeance of an angry assembly, exasperated by an exhibition of guile and state-craft. But it was his great object —apart from his personal aims—to carry out the revolution without shedding blood; he accomplished this with perfect success, and, in the existing condition of France, this really excuses his acts and his policy. The Catos, who condemn Brumaire as a crime, are wilfully blind to the plainest facts; the Constitution of the year III. had failed; France appeared falling at home and abroad, and the genius of Napoleon was required to raise the nation out of defeat and ruin. The *coup d'état* was, beyond dispute, welcome to nineteen-twentieths of the French people; and in this matter they were the true judges. The nation is happy which has had no experience of shocks like these in its peaceful annals; but the majesty of the Senate did not stop Cæsar; the Long Parliament was destroyed by Cromwell, and an occasional Dictatorship was an institution, acknowledged to be a necessity of state by the most sagacious community known to history. The hour had come and the man had arrived, and the justification of Napoleon, at this crisis, was the Law of Public Safety, to which all must yield.

CHAPTER IV.

The Provisional Government of France after the 18th Brumaire —The Constitution of the year VIII.—Its singular characteristics—Napoleon First Consul and the real ruler of France—Financial reforms—The pacification of La Vendée—Wise and merciful policy to *émigrés* and priests—Restoration of internal order—Preparations for the campaign of 1800—Napoleon crosses the Alps—Battle of Marengo—Great results—Renewal of the war after an armistice—Battle of Hohenlinden —Prostration of Austria and peace of Lunéville—Struggle with England—The Armed League of the North—Evacuation of Egypt—Peace of Amiens—Paris in 1802—Monarchical tendencies of Napoleon's government.

IEYÈS had hoped that he would be able to turn the 18th Brumaire to his own advantage, but his calculations quickly proved vain. The Provisional Government formed by the *coup d'état* consisted of Napoleon, Sieyès, and Ducos,—the last merely a neglected cipher —who gave themselves the title of Consul, but the authority of Napoleon was, from the first, absolute. Sieyès, if we are to believe Napoleon, discovered, after a brief experience, that the young general was deeply versed in

civil administration, and even in politics, and willingly relinquished the conduct of the State to one who, he declared, "had the will, the capacity, and the power to direct everything." Napoleon, however, entrusted to Sieyès the task of framing a new constitution for France, for in this province his colleague enjoyed a reputation without a rival, and, with a clear perception of the real state of affairs, he took the whole system of administration and executive government into his own hands, that is, he assumed the Dictatorship, which had been, all through, his aim. He was admirably qualified for this supreme position, and circumstances powerfully told in his favour. As we have seen, he had diligently pursued studies connected with political science, and though he never rose to the highest conception of what ought to be the estate of man, he possessed much of the knowledge required for the management of a great European state. His military experience, too, had made him acquainted with many departments of civil affairs; and he had a faculty of organisation perhaps never equalled, and a power of calculation, a force of insight, an industry, and a capacity of mastering details, which Nature has seldom bestowed on man. These gifts were pledges that he would succeed in his task, yet the accidents of his life and career, and the attitude, at this juncture, of France, co-operated strongly in the same direction. He was a Corsican, who had scarcely taken part in the terrible drama of the Revolution; he had had no share in its worst excesses and had almost stood aloof from its factions; he was chiefly known as a great captain who had

shown a marked repugnance to extreme ideas, and these antecedents seemed to make him fitted to rule, to reform, and to heal the wounds of the State. France, too, had called him to power before the 18th Brumaire, and when she found that he was really supreme, she rallied round him with passionate ardour, was ready to place her resources in his hands, and did him loyal and almost universal service. Years afterwards, in the reflections of exile, he described this great outburst of national feeling as not the least wonderful incident of his career.*

In a few weeks Sieyès had produced the Constitution of the year VIII., the name given it in the Republican Calendar. A word must be said on this latest birth of the French philosophy of the eighteenth century, for it illustrated the state of opinion in France at the time; it created institutions of a most singular kind, turned to account by the despotism they were designed to check, and it proved the incapacity of its author to understand the true requirements of France at the existing crisis. The great objects of Sieyès were to prevent or lessen the violent oscillations of the public mind which had led to *coups d'état* like the 18th Fructidor, and had placed the legislature and the executive government in antagonism under the Directorial *régime*, so to divide authority in the State that it could not become dangerous to the general welfare, and to

* *Commentaries*, tome iv., 3, Ed., 1867. The passage is too long for quotation, but should be studied. It is a fine specimen of Napoleon's power of thought and expression.

INSTALLATION OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE AT THE PETIT LUXEMBOURG.
FROM THE PAINTING BY COUDER.

secure stability and order even at the expense of freedom. To attain these ends he devised one of the most curious pieces of political mechanism that has appeared in history. The Sovereignty of the French people was acknowledged in name, for Rousseau still had hold on the hearts of men, but the Sovereign had no real power in the direction of the State; his only function was to select lists of candidates for the public service, ascending from the lowest to the highest offices. The Deliberative Bodies, charged to assist, to advise, or, if necessary, to control the government, were not to be elective in any sense; they were to be chosen from the chief "notables" on the lists, by an authority without one popular element, and they were to consist of a Council of State, which was to propose measures of all kinds; of a Legislative Assembly, which could only approve or disapprove of what was brought before it, and was absolutely deprived of the right of discussion; and of a Tribunate intended to debate these projects, but in turn disabled from voting on them; the object of this partition of powers being to make these bodies, which, be it observed, were at no point in touch with the people, checks upon each other, and without commanding influence. Above the Council of State, the Legislature, and the Tribunate was placed the Senate, the only real source and depositary of power in this strange polity. This body, selected, too, from the highest "notables," but composed of wealthy and aged men, was to be nominated by the Executive in the first instance, but thenceforward was to be self-elective, and prac-

tically it was to be supreme in the State. It was not to have an active part in public affairs, but it was given a potent veto on them; the Deliberative Bodies depended on it, for all their members were to be appointed by it; and, most important of all, it had, indirectly, complete control over the Executive Government. That government was to be composed of a Grand Elector, a mere gilded image of the dignity of the State, whose chief function was to choose two Consuls to conduct military and civil affairs; and the Consuls again were to name the ministers, who were to do the work of the State through themselves or their agents, all, with few exceptions, "notables" on the lists. But the Grand Elector was to be chosen by the Senate, and could be dismissed by it; the two Consuls and the ministers were in the same state of dependence; and the Senate, therefore, was the real ruler of France.

This constitution shut out the nation from any practical share in its own affairs, and made it merely a passive agency, to give the State a choice of its official classes; and it shows how France, worn out and exhausted by the excesses and follies of revolution, had abandoned the ideas of 1789 and the golden dreams of democratic liberty. As for the Deliberative Bodies, they had nothing in common with a free parliament of any kind; they were creatures of power kept apart from the people: the Council of State naturally lent itself to the government; the mute Legislature and the merely talking Tribunate could not possess authority, from the nature of the case, and were not only set against

each other, but could offer no resistance to a strong ruler.

The most absurd, however, of these creations was the Senate, and the Executive dependent on it. France required a Dictator at this moment, yet Sieyès, with absolute blindness to fact, gave the supreme direction and control of the State to an aged oligarchy of mere functionaries, to an ornamental chief, like a Doge of Venice, and to an Executive of subordinates; that is, weakened and paralysed the whole frame of government. Napoleon accepted parts of this scheme which obviously furthered his real objects; but he properly swept other parts away; and if in this as in many other instances, ambition was probably his leading motive, he certainly did France an immense service. At all times jealous of popular rights, and cordially disliking democratic power, he approved of the arrangements made by Sieyès to deprive the nation of real authority, though he justly remarked that the lists of candidates were an unwise restriction on the Executive government. The Council of State, the Legislature, and the Tribunate were sanctioned by him with but few objections, for these institutions he clearly saw could not be effective checks on his power, and could be made its convenient screens and instruments. But he insisted on removing the Senate from the supreme place it held in the State; and as to the Grand Elector, the two Consuls, and the administration to be formed in this way, he denounced them as false conceptions of a dreamer ignorant of human affairs, which would give France

a hopelessly bad Executive, and would involve her in defeat and ruin. Sieyès yielded on every point; the Constitution was virtually transformed, and though the changes in it appeared few, Napoleon acquired all but absolute power, for the Senate was shorn of its chief prerogatives, and every part of the Executive government was unreservedly placed in his hands. The First Consul, as he was now called, became thus by law as he had been in fact, the real master and head of France, and his Dictatorship was hardly veiled by associating with him a Second and Third Consul, mere satellites who could only advise. Sieyès and Ducos refused to accept these posts; Napoleon gave them to Cambacérès and Lebrun, one a sagacious and learned jurist, the other a servant of the old monarchy, but both devoted creatures of his own; and accurately judging the character of Sieyès, he made his late colleague and former rival, the richly endowed President of the new-made Senate, and relegated him into wealthy obscurity.

Napoleon, meanwhile, had been directing his energies to the stupendous task of raising France from the depths into which she had fallen. The finances attracted his attention first, for the restoration of these was the first need of the country. When he took the reins, after the 18th Brumaire, the financial condition of France seemed hopeless; the Treasury was absolutely without specie; the fallen government had no credit; National Bankruptcy had been practically declared, the Funds oscillated between six and ten, and the moneyed classes,

wronged by unjust exactions, were bitterly hostile to the men lately in power. The establishment of the rule of the First Consul put an end speedily to this state of things; the new government inspired confidence, and considerable sums were advanced by the bankers and capitalists of the chief towns of France, to supply the immediate wants of the State. Large contributions too were obtained from the young republics sprung from their French parent, and though this has been laid to the charge of Napoleon, he really followed, in this matter, the example set him by the Directory.

These resources, however, were for the moment only, and the First Consul seized the occasion to put the finances of France on an improved footing. For this purpose he availed himself of the administrative skill and experience of Gaudin, another functionary of the Bourbon *régime;* and, largely owing to the measures of this very able man, a financial position which appeared desperate, ere long assumed a promising aspect. The exhaustion of the Treasury and the bankruptcy of the State were not due, as was generally supposed—this was one capital mistake of Pitt—to any real decline of France in wealth; the country in spite of Revolution had made considerable material progress; they were caused by the reckless legislation of 1789–90, which had practically allowed the people to tax themselves; by maladministration of several kinds of revenue; by the utter discredit of Government paper, and not least by the unfair charges which had been imposed on the more wealthy citizens. Gaudin, with the full sanction of

the First Consul, applied effectual remedies to this state of things: borrowing from precedents of the old monarchy he established a strong and centralised system to assess taxation, and to enforce payments; he administered the revenue by improved methods; he called in and cancelled the bad Treasury notes; he abolished the iniquitous plunder of the rich, and he devised expedients simple and well planned by which the officials charged with the duty were given a direct interest to collect the taxes, and the full value of these were assured to the State. The Bank of France, too, and a Sinking Fund were further creations of this able minister; he dealt most successfully with the remains of the National Debt which were still recognised; and even made some provision for two thirds of it which had been repudiated from time to time by successive governments since 1793.

Through these means France began to emerge, in a few months, out of distress and bankruptcy; her financial prosperity became assured; and the foundations were laid of her financial system, which has stood the infallible test of Time. Yet, admirable as the measures of Gaudin were, this recovery could not have been so rapid as it was, but for the improvement in the general frame of the government, and especially, perhaps, for the absolute trust of the great mass of the people in their chosen ruler, the distinctive feature of the first years of the Consulate. La Vendée, meantime, had been taken in hand by Napoleon, with characteristic vigour; and his policy as regards the great Western tract of Catholic,

Feudal, and Royal France, was conspicuous for its boldness and wisdom. These provinces had submitted to Hoche; but they had risen in revolt in 1799, under the influence of flattering *émigrés* and of English gold; the defeats of the Republic, and the weak and cruel conduct of the Directory to the seigneurs and the priests, had strengthened the insurrection, and made it formidable.

Napoleon, collecting an army of sixty thousand men, put down the rebellion with a determined hand; but he made clemency, conciliation, and healing justice follow in the train of irresistible force. He amnestied insurgent leaders, who laid down their arms; he put an end to the wrongful edicts, which made the families and estates of Vendéan nobles responsible for every act of disorder; above all he gave the clergy their altars again, and made no secret, as had been the case in Italy, of his sympathy with their ancient faith. La Vendée was easily pacified in this way; and though a few severe examples were made, and George Cadoudal, one of the rebel chiefs—a plotter of evil we shall meet again—maintained a sullen and threatening attitude, the pacification was happy and complete. The same moderate and judicious policy was seen in many other important measures, and was extended to every part of the nation. Most of the exiles of Fructidor were recalled; the First Consul, who, even in youth, had saved *émigrés* from the Terrorist axe, closed once for all the lists of proscription, and allowed hundreds of exiles to return to France, and he openly avowed that he drew no distinctions between Frenchmen, for events in the past, if they

were ready, for the future, to be loyal to the State. The marked favour, however, he showed to the Church was the most striking feature of his present conduct. He ordered a solemn funeral for Pius VI.—the aged pontiff had died in France after the Republic had been set up in Rome—; he stopped the persecution of the nonjuring priests, extended lately even to their conforming brethren; he threw open the churches which, in many parishes, had been closed by the local authorities; he restored Sunday as a sacred day of rest; and he substituted in the case of the clergy, a simple promise of obedience for the oath to the State, considered by many an affront to Rome, and inconsistent with their canonical vows. Six years after the Goddess of Reason had desecrated the aisles of Notre Dame, the new ruler of France, it had become evident, might yet be the Eldest Son of the Church.

In this way, an able, wise, and successful government, the strong guardian of the great interests which had grown out of the Revolution, but national,* founded on a wide basis, and visibly inclining to much that belonged to the Bourbon monarchy, and to the old Church of France, replaced, with a man of genius at its head, the worthless rule of the feeble Directory. These months, too, witnessed the

* The spirit of this government is well expressed in these words of Napoleon, "Ralliez vous tous à la masse du peuple. Le simple titre de citoyen Français vaut bien sans doute, celui de royaliste, de clichien, de jacobin, de feuillant, et ces milles et une dénominations qu'enfante l'esprit de faction, et qui, depuis dix ans, tendent a precipiter la nation dans un abîme d'ou il est temps enfin qu'elle soit tirée pour toujours."—*Corr.*, tome vi., 12.

inauguration of the local administration of the First Consul—a most striking instance of his commanding powers; the brigandage, which had overrun whole provinces, was repressed by a vigorous police, and by special tribunals; the roads and canals, which had almost gone to ruin, in the anarchy of the previous ten years, were by degrees restored and improved; and noble public works were planned, and soon begun, which remain grand monuments of Napoleon's reign. A few other events of the time must be noticed, for they clearly illustrate Napoleon's character. The evident tendency of the First Consul, to adopt usages of the ancient *régime*, and specially his clemency to the exiled *émigrés*, induced many leaders of the Royalist party to believe that he meant to play the part of Monk, and to be the restorer of the Bourbon throne; and the Pretender, afterwards Louis XVIII., wrote to him, in this sense, with condescending hopefulness. Napoleon, however, put an end to these fancies; he plainly let the enthusiasts know that he was the Champion of the Revolution, and the Chief of France, and, in a letter* of singular grace and dignity, he urged the Comte de Provence not to attempt to return "over the corpses of a hundred thousand Frenchmen." Yet the First Consul showed that he could be far more stern to the faction which had overturned the monarchy, and had stained the Revolution with atrocious crimes. The extreme Republicans looked

* This letter, and that addressed to the Prince Regent after Waterloo, the one written in prosperous, the other in adverse, fortune, are models of composition of this kind.

askance at his policy; and a few of the old Jacobins had begun to plot against his life. The Royalist fanatics, however, were more dangerous; and he narrowly escaped destruction at the hands of conspirators guided by George Cadoudal, who fired an infernal machine, as he was on his way to the theatre. The intending assassins received their due; but Napoleon seized the occasion to mete out vengeance to the remains of the fallen and despised Terrorists; and a hundred and thirty of these men of blood were banished by a mere act of power. Five sixths were probably deeply guilty, yet the act was ominous of a coming time, when despotism was to be unchecked in France.

The enemy, however, was on the borders of France; and in the midst of the civil cares of State, Napoleon had been making preparations for war. He had scarcely been installed in the Consular seat, when he made offers of peace to England and Austria; and history will not echo the clamour of partisans, and pronounce these overtures wholly insincere. His proposals, however, were coldly rejected; for the Allies were sanguine after the events of 1799, and the issue was left to the arbitrament of the sword. Two circumstances favoured the prospects of France: the Czar Paul, chafing at the defeats of Suvóroff, which he attributed mainly to Austrian jealousy, had refused further aid to the Coalition, and England, after her reverses in Holland, could do little upon the Continent; while Prussia, it should be added, which, since 1795, had been at peace with the French Republic, was evidently well-disposed to the First

Consul's government. The brunt of the war therefore fell on Austria, and the situation had become very different from what it had been in the spring of 1799. On the other hand, the French scarcely clung to the skirts of Italy, one great Austrian army threatened Provence; another, partly composed of the troops of the Empire, spread over Swabia, and approached the Rhine; and Europe believed that the campaign of 1800 would end in a successful invasion of France.

The first care of Napoleon, in this position of affairs, was to succour and strengthen the French armies in the field, where, as always, his administrative gifts were manifest. The newly-made Conscription yielded ample levies, for France had faith in the warrior of 1796; the Treasury, partly replenished by financial skill, was able to afford assistance to the armed masses left in a state of destitution and want; vigorous efforts were made to restore discipline, and Napoleon, trusting to the magic of his name, made earnest appeals to his old soldiers to prove themselves worthy of their past glory. The military power of France was thus much augmented, though still inferior to that of her foes; and, even in two or three months, it had assumed an aspect far more formidable than was generally supposed. The First Consul next addressed himself to the distribution of these growing forces, and his arrangements appeared, at first sight, defensive—at least not calculated to alarm his enemy. The divisions, which had been widely scattered from Switzerland to the Lower Rhine, were formed into a single army; and, placed

in the experienced hands of Moreau, were opposed to the Imperialist host in Swabia; and Masséna, at the head of a much weaker force, holding the Apennines and the Genoese seaboard, confronted the Austrians, who from Piedmont, had their outposts on the Roya and the Var. Any other forces which remained to France were disseminated in the interior, and not yet organised; and, in fact, it was believed that she could not create another army.

In this situation Napoleon formed a plan of operations, the finest perhaps of his unrivalled conceptions in war, though its execution was not equal to the design. The Alpine tract of Switzerland, which projects, like a huge bastion, into the lowlands of Italy and Germany, on either side, was a dependency of the French Republic; and it might therefore be made a kind of sally-port for French armies to issue in force on enemies in the valleys of the Po and the Danube. The Austrian army which, under Melas, menaced France on her south-eastern frontier, was not less than 120,000 strong. Masséna had not more than 40,000 men; but he could be trusted to make a stern resistance; and the force of Melas, thrown forward to the Var, would be dangerously exposed, could a hostile army reach its communications spreading to the Adige. On the other hand, Moreau had about 130,000 men opposed to about 120,000 in the hands of Kray, in part composed of very inferior troops; and Moreau would certainly be able to defend Alsace, and perhaps to defeat and even overwhelm his adversary. The First Consul gave Masséna the task of holding Melas in check as long as

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possible; and he directed Moreau to advance to Schaffhausen, to surprise and, if possible, to cut off Kray; but, in any case, to throw his enemy back, and to send a detachment across the St. Gothard Pass, to co-operate with the force it would find in Italy. Meanwhile the decisive effort was to be made by Napoleon: an army, yet to be formed by him, was to issue from Switzerland, to cross the Alps, to push forward into the valley of the Po, and, joining hands with the troops sent by Moreau, was to close on the rear of the army of Melas, and to cut it off from its base in Lombardy.

The great campaign of 1800 was thus conceived, and good judges have deemed it its author's masterpiece. Melas attacked Masséna in the early spring, and, though he separated his opponent's forces, Masséna shut himself up within Genoa, and made a defence ever memorable in war. Ere long Moreau had taken the field; he had nothing of Napoleon's commanding genius, and he did not venture to march on Schaffhausen; he crossed the Rhine by complicated and ill-combined movements, but, if he did not surround and rout Kray, he accomplished the most important part of his mission. He defeated the Austrian chief in the Swabian plains, forced him back on Ulm upon the upper Danube, and keeping his antagonist far distant, was able to direct the promised contingent across the Alps to the aid of Napoleon.

The First Consul, meanwhile, had been collecting an army, about forty thousand strong, composed mainly of veteran troops, drawn from La Vendée

and other distant provinces, this being intended to cross the Alps to circumvent and destroy Melas. To conceal an operation, of which the success depended almost wholly on secrecy and surprise, Napoleon assembled a medley of conscripts at Dijon, giving out that this was his army of Italy; and the Austrians, who soon discovered the impotence of this force, were completely deceived by a masterly stratagem. By the second week of May, the French army, with the First Consul at its head, moved rapidly to the Swiss frontier, was at the verge of the barrier of the Alps; the principal mass had soon crossed the St. Bernard, and a small force was sent by Mont Cenis, in order to perplex and divide the enemy. The main body was stopped by a hill-fort for a time, but the obstacle was ere long overcome, and the French, descending into the valleys of the streams that form the northern feeders of the Po, had reached Milan by the 2d of June, having thrust aside the weak hostile detachments that endeavoured in vain to arrest their march. Napoleon was at once joined by the divisions sent across the St. Gothard by Moreau, and, having nearly sixty thousand men in hand, he crossed the Po, holding both banks, and advanced to the well-known Stradella Pass, where the spurs of the Apennines almost touch the river, this movement placing him even now on the Austrian communications and rear.

Melas had endeavoured, meantime, to unite his forces, but he hesitated and lost precious time; he had been deceived by the apparition of an enemy

NAPOLEON CROSSING THE ALPS.
FROM THE PAINTING BY PAUL DELAROCHE.

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from Mont Cenis, and he would not believe that Napoleon had reached Milan; one of his lieutenants had hung back to garrison Genoa, surrendered by Masséna at last; another had been defeated near the Var by Suchet with a part of Masséna's army; and the Austrian commander had not collected fifty thousand men by the second week of June round his headquarters at Alessandria. At this moment Napoleon took a step which well nigh caused the failure of his plans—believing that Melas would try to escape by the seaboard after the fall of Genoa, he resolved at any risk to close on his foe; and he marched into the great plain of Marengo, almost within sight of the Austrian camp, with an army much weaker than that of Melas and very inferior in cannon and horsemen.

His adversary, a stout soldier, seized the chance before him; and, on the 14th of June, 1800, he furiously attacked the French army, hoping to break through the toils cast around him, and to force his way successfully to the Po and the Adige. The battle raged for hours with varying fortunes; but the day had been nearly lost to Napoleon, when the arrival of Desaix and his division on the field—the warrior fell in the very hour of victory,—and an opportune charge of the heavy French cavalry, suddenly changed a disaster into a complete triumph. The results were then seen of the grand operations which had barred to Melas his line of retreat; the Austrians had no choice but to make terms, and though they were allowed to return to the Adige, they abandoned all the large tract between,

and Italy had been regained by a march and a battle, while invasion had rolled far away from France.

Marengo appeared to Europe a kind of portent; an army had risen, as it were, out of the depths of France, the existence of which had been declared impossible, and, at the bidding of Napoleon, it had mastered the Alps and had annihilated a far more powerful enemy. The contest, however, was not over, the First Consul checked the exulting acclaim which greeted him on his return to Paris; the tenacity of Austria was known to him, and she was still supported by English subsidies; and though Austria was glad to accept an armistice, he made great preparations to renew hostilities. Months were spent in negotiations without result, and winter had come when the conflict began again. By this time, Moreau had advanced from Ulm to the Inn, being now largely superior in force, a French army was ready to invade the Tyrol, the victorious army of Italy had approached the Mincio, and Austria was quite overmatched on the theatre of war. Moreau had the good fortune to strike the decisive stroke, though his operations, as a whole, have been severely criticised. Kray had been replaced by the Archduke John, a brother of the far abler Charles, and this young theorist, in the presumptuous hope that he could perform the feats of Napoleon, crossed the Inn, in order to surprise Moreau, whose army had been unwisely divided, and to cut him off from his base in Bavaria. He gained, for a moment, partial success, but his force was not sufficient to attain his object; he gave up a manœu-

vre seen to be vain, and on the 3d of December, 1800, he attacked Moreau, with very inferior numbers, in the great forest of Hohenlinden. The attack was feeble and ill-combined; Moreau skilfully directed a large detachment which fell on the Austrian left and rear, and he gained a decisive and splendid victory, though in this, as in all his campaigns, he had not exhibited the powers of a really great general. He now rapidly advanced and had drawn near Vienna, when the Archduke Charles, invoked, as in 1797, to sustain the monarchy in the hour of defeat, proposed terms, as resistance had become impossible, and Moreau honourably accepted these, on a pledge that Austria would make peace. The secondary French armies had, meanwhile, advanced victoriously beyond the Adige.

Negotiations now progressed at Lunéville, once a chief town of Imperial Lorraine. Joseph Bonaparte, Napoleon's eldest brother, was the plenipotentiary of the Republic; Austria was represented by Cobentzel, who had treated with Napoleon in 1797; but the First Consul was far more exacting than he had been when the mere chief of an army. He was the undisputed master of France; he had restored her power abroad and at home; and nothing seemed impossible to a conqueror whose ambition only grew as its objects multiplied. Austria yielded after a mere diplomatic contest; she was exhausted, and without an ally on the Continent, and the Peace of Lunéville was made in February, 1801. By this compact Belgium and the western bank of the Rhine were again formally ceded to

France, and, as at Campo Formio, she acquired, once more, her "natural boundary" on the side of Germany. But, in other respects, Lunéville went far beyond Campo Formio in changing the face of Europe. Austria lost a large part of what she still possessed in Italy; the Cisalpine Republic was greatly enlarged, and Tuscany was taken from its Grand Duke, an Austrian Prince, and bestowed on the heir of the Duke of Parma, a near kinsman of the royal house of Spain, which had become almost a vassal of France. The power of Austria in Italy was thus nearly destroyed, and though Pius VII., the lately elected Pope, was restored to Rome through the First Consul's policy, and the King of Naples was placed on his throne again, in deference to the wishes of the Czar, at this moment almost in league with Napoleon, still French supremacy in the peninsula was assured, and as the King of Sardinia had been scarcely thought of in the negotiations brought to a close at Lunéville, it was evident that France meant to annex Piedmont. Austria, too, was forced to recognise the new republics, which had sprung into being since Campo Formio, and which, modelled by Napoleon's hands, were becoming instruments of his power; she acquiesced in what really was a vast extension of French domination, and she tacitly agreed that the Princes who had lost territory by the cession of the western bank of the Rhine, and by the changes recently made in Italy, should be indemnified out of the great German Bishoprics, an arrangement which the First Consul saw would be in the interest of Prussia, almost an

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ally of France, and would enable him to intervene, with effect, in Germany, the traditional policy of the House of Bourbon. Napoleon insisted, besides, that Austria, after the precedent of the treaty of Utrecht, should make peace on behalf of the whole Empire. The reason of this was twofold: the Congress of Rastadt had come to nothing, owing to the interminable delay made by the small German States, and it had witnessed a dark and atrocious incident, the unprovoked murder of the plenipotentiaries of France, one of the worst crimes of an age of violence. The First Consul took good care that such events should not occur again.

France, which had seemed fallen a few months before, became thus the dominant State of the Continent, supreme from the Adriatic shores to the coasts of the Netherlands. England, as before, was the only remaining enemy; and Napoleon, who, we have seen, had perceived the real power of the Mistress of the Seas, addressed himself to a fierce struggle with England, his passionate energy being only quickened by the numberless obstacles that beset his path. Some circumstances seemed, at this time, in his favour; he had closed a maritime quarrel with the United States, and the extreme pretensions of England at sea had inclined the Northern Powers to revive the armed neutrality of 1780. Napoleon saw and seized his advantage; he won over the Czar by diplomatic arts, and by a promise to give him Malta, besieged by a British fleet since the Nile; and Paul placed himself at the head of a formidable league of maritime

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States pledged to resist "the tyranny of England" by force.

The alliance, however, was fatally weakened by Nelson's victory of Copenhagen, and it was dissolved by the tragic death of the Czar, murdered in his sleep through an intrigue of the Palace, which caused a complete change in Russian policy, his successor, Alexander, though friendly to France, refusing to take part in a contest with England, which would have been ruinous to the trade of his empire. Napoleon thus lost one great chance of success, and, meanwhile, he was overmatched and hampered in a conflict with the Power that commanded the sea through the position of French affairs in the East. The French army in Egypt had retained its conquest; after some hesitations and weak parleys, Kléber had routed the Turks in a great battle, and though he perished under an assassin's blows, his command quietly passed to his successor, Menou, who had failed on the 13th Vendémiaire, and who, though in no sense a capable man, administered well, and maintained order. But the invading colonists were cut off from France, and they were evidently an easy object of attack to an enemy that held the Mediterranean in his grasp, and that could collect imposing forces for a descent on Egypt. Napoleon made great and incessant efforts to reinforce his imprisoned army, and he attempted to divert the intention of England by invading Portugal in conjunction with Spain. His labours, however, proved in vain; an English army, greatly superior in numbers, landed at Aboukir in

the March of 1801; it defeated the French in a well-contested battle, and as a large force of Turks was at hand, and a contingent of Sepoys drawn from India, the loss of Egypt to France was made certain. After brief negotiations, the French army was transported in British ships to Toulon, and though Menou had shown no military skill, the result ought not to be laid to his charge, whatever may be said by some French enthusiasts. France obviously could not hold Egypt against a Power supreme in Mediterranean waters.

In this bitter, but indecisive contest, Napoleon had been, on the whole, worsted. Yet England had gradually inclined to peace; she was isolated and without support on the Continent, and she felt the danger of the League of the North; she had no wish to engage for a second time in a single-handed encounter with France; and her supremacy on the ocean was completely established. Pitt, too, had given place to the very inferior Addington, and though the country had rapidly advanced in wealth, the temporary distress caused by two bad harvests had made the nation eager to bring the war to an end. Even before Egypt had been surrendered by the French, negotiations had been set on foot; and ere long they were carried on at Amiens, Joseph Bonaparte, as at Lunéville, being the envoy of France, and the representative of England being Cornwallis, a soldier and statesman of world-wide experience.

The position of the two great rivals had become remarkable; France was the undisputed queen of

the Continent, but England was the absolute ruler of the Seas. She had half destroyed the navies of France and Spain; she had deprived France and her allies of a colonial empire; and her supremacy in India had been assured. The First Consul fought hard for France and her interests; but his discomfiture in Egypt and the refusal of Spain to persist in invading Portugal, compelled him to moderate his imperious language, and after discussions protracted for months, peace was signed at Amiens in March, 1802. By this treaty Trinidad and Ceylon were ceded to England; but she restored the other colonies taken from France and her allies; and she engaged ultimately to give back Malta, which had been for a considerable time in her hands, to its original owners, the Knights of St. John, under the protectorate of a European Power. On the other hand, France retained her commanding position in Europe; she regained the greater part of her colonial settlements; and she recovered for Spain, and even for Holland, nearly all the colonies they had lost in the war. The treaty unhappily was silent on points even then seen to be of great importance: the conditions as to Malta were somewhat obscure; nothing was said about the prospects of Piedmont; and England distinctly refused to recognise the new states, which under the name of republics had become dependent vassals of France, in the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Northern Italy. The Peace was obviously a questionable truce; but the two nations were tired of strife; and they accepted, for the time, a hazardous compromise.

The Peace of Amiens was followed by supplemental treaties between France and other States of the Continent. The world enjoyed a brief moment of repose, though felt to be only a pause in the conflict between the Revolution and the old Powers of Europe. A great concourse of foreigners appeared in Paris, eager to see again, after a long space of time, the capital which had overthrown the Bastille, had been the terrible seat of Jacobin crimes, had sent the armed force of France to overrun the continent, had beheld Vendémiaire, Fructidor, and the 18th Brumaire, and yet, save under the Reign of Terror, had been always a centre of brilliant pleasure. Yet all eyes were chiefly turned on the extraordinary man, the offspring of an obscure Corsican, who had twice shattered the league of the foes of France, had surpassed all that had been known in war, had changed the weakness of France into formidable strength, had gathered the Revolution into his master-hands, and had given its forces a new direction; and had established a firm and successful government in sympathy with Monarchy, with the Church, with the Past.

Napoleon, at this moment, had won the esteem of many of the leading men of Europe; he had struck down and humbled Continental powers; he had made the conquered feel the weight of his sword; but he had quelled Jacobinism and put down anarchy; and he was popular in Austria, in Prussia, and even in England. One of the most curious spectacles of the day was the magnificence of the First Consul's Court, and the general tendency to

the restoration of monarchic government. Napoleon had taken up his abode in the Tuileries; he had placed the unburied remains of Turenne, torn from St. Denis in the madness of 1793, in the Invalides with extraordinary pomp, in honour to the greatest warrior of the fallen monarchy; he surrounded himself with the ceremonial of royalty; and already some of the old courtiers of Versailles returned from exile, did their liege lord homage. The change was seen in that mirror of usage, fashion; the loose immodest garb, the classical tresses, the free manners of the beauties of Paris were replaced by stately costumes, and ordered etiquette; and though military brilliancy was still predominant, there was a return to the observances of the old monarchy. The only proscribed class was the wreck of the Terrorists; and Canning remarked with truth, in the House of Commons, that already "the likeness of a kingly crown" was apparent around Napoleon's head.

The campaign of Marengo, at least in design, was the most dazzling of Napoleon's exploits in war. The plan of issuing from Switzerland by a double movement, in the rear of the enemy in Swabia and Italy, was perhaps equal to any formed by Hannibal; but the execution of it was far from perfect. Moreau completely failed to cut off Kray; Napoleon made a distinct mistake, in marching into the plain of Marengo, and he exhibited in this instance, the fierce resolve to encounter his adversary at any risk, which cost him dear on more than one occasion. The most striking feature of this part of his career is the restoration of order in France, her sudden and

rapid rise out of misfortune, and the revival of her military power; and though this was largely due to the energy and resource of a great nation not often quelled by disaster, it should perhaps be mainly ascribed to Napoleon's genius. Faults may be found with the First Consul's policy at home; it showed already despotic tendencies, it concentrated excessive power in his hands; but it was on the whole, enlightened, judicious, and masterly. His conduct to foreign powers was more open to censure; he still showed respect for the old order of Europe, and especially for the Catholic Church; but he had been arrogant and harsh in success, and he had given proof of a mere conqueror's unrestrained ambition. He had curbed the excesses of the Revolution, but calm observers had already declared, that he was making use of its still gigantic force to turn France into the paths of war, and to bring all Europe into subjection to her power. That ascendency had been in part realised; it depended on Napoleon in a great measure, whether he would keep it within its present limits, or would endeavour to extend it, whatever the hazard. He was a soldier who had achieved wonders; he was the chief of a nation that had always aimed at pre-eminence as a military power; he was the armed champion of the French Revolution, and he was surrounded by States defeated and baffled, but representing monarchic and feudal Europe, and almost inevitably hostile to democratic France, whatever might be the type of her government. Would he become the good genius of an age of trouble and war, or only its grandest, but most portentous figure?

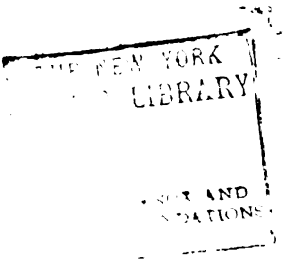
CHAPTER V.

Re-organisation of society in France by Napoleon—Administrative and judicial reforms—The Code—Education—The Legion of Honour—The Concordat—Opposition—The Tribunate reduced—Foreign affairs—Amnesty of the *émigrés*—The Italian Republic—Napoleon its president—Italy kept dependent—Annexation of Piedmont—Settlement of Germany; of Switzerland—Napoleon made First Consul for life—Rupture of the Peace of Amiens—War with England—Reflections on Napoleon's policy.

WHILE France had been victorious abroad Napoleon had gone on with the work of reform inaugurated by the 18th Brumaire. Marengo had assured the Peace of Lunéville; the Peace of Amiens had closed the contest with England, and as the Constitution of the year VIII. had transformed the political order of France, he sought to effect far-reaching changes in her social and ecclesiastical order, which would reconcile the Revolution with the past, and would give more ample scope to his own dictatorship. He had already stamped a wholly new character on the Republican system of local government; and his policy in this respect had

NAPOLEON.

FROM A PENCIL SKETCH BY ISABEY.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been very significant. Local administration, under the old *régime*, had been centralised to an extreme degree; thirty Intendants, it had been said, ruled France, and local franchises and the liberty they afford had disappeared in a state of society without active life and almost reduced to servitude.

The Revolution had led to a wild reaction against this narrow and oppressive system; decentralisation had been extravagant, and absolute self-government had been bestowed on the communes from Brittany to Provence, an arrangement, which in the phrase of Burke, "split France into forty thousand republics," uncontrolled by a real central authority. The supremacy of Paris, perhaps, alone saved the State from disintegration and ruin at the great crisis of 1793–94; but local self-government had been attended with mischiefs and dangers of many kinds, and local administration in 1799–1800 had become a chaos of waste and anarchy. The Communes—akin to the Anglo-Saxon townships—excessive in numbers, and each too small, had been replaced by much larger units; these were governed by elective local bodies, without experience or skill in affairs, and unchecked by any central direction; and the results appeared in the grossest mismanagement, in revolutionary schemes and follies, and especially, as we have seen, in the complete failure of the machinery employed to collect the revenue. The First Consul put an end to a condition of things which had become intolerable, and a peril to the State, and placed the system of local administration in France on a basis, which, restricted as it was, is that on which it has ever

since rested. He abolished the incapable Elective bodies, the creatures and agents of popular licence, which, without guidance or control from above, had misgoverned the districts they ruled, and had dangerously encroached on the supreme power; and he set on foot an order of things, essentially different, nay well nigh opposite.

Availing himself of the local divisions of territory which the Revolution had made, he placed at the head of every Department of France a functionary of the central government, charged to superintend all local affairs; and this high official was represented by subordinates in every local circumscription down to the smallest unit, the Commune. The hierarchy of Prefects, Sub-prefects, and Maires dependent upon the chief power in the State had thus practically the direction of local affairs, and centralisation was again established in an important part of the national life. Local self-government, however, was not wholly effaced; the inhabitants of every district retained a right of assembling in an Elective Council, but the powers of this body were greatly curtailed.

This immense change was almost a return to kindred institutions of the fallen monarchy; in Napoleon's language, "it placed a First Consul and his agents in every Department of France"; and obviously it favoured despotic power. The central government has ever since been supreme in local affairs in France, and the individual self-reliance and energy, which naturally flow from local franchises, have not been well developed in the French community. Yet the system has flourished, almost unchanged, through

all the vicissitudes of the State in France; it plainly falls in with inherent tendencies and sympathies of the French people, and it has secured France an administration of local affairs economical, orderly, and very efficient. The next work of the First Consul was the reform of the judicial organisation of France, modelled partly, too, on the ideas of the past. The Bourbon *régime* had made no provision for cheap, summary, and expeditious justice; the tribunals were closed to the humbler classes; and an aristocratic caste administered the laws in High Courts, known by the name of Parliaments, with a slow, cumbrous, and costly procedure. All this had vanished in 1789–91; the judicial office had been made elective; a large body of *Justices de Paix* had been chosen to settle petty disputes, in a great measure without fixed rules; and a number of tribunals of First Instance, directed by men who owed their position, not to learning or worth, but to popular suffrage, was set up, with a right of appeal, of little use, to defeated suitors. The change had unquestionably done some good; but not to speak of the terrible wrongs it had caused in a revolutionary time, it had produced social confusion and discord; the laws had become uncertain, and were ill administered; the courts had ceased to command respect; and the want of an appellate jurisdiction that could be relied on, in important matters, had had evil results.

The reforms effected by the First Consul in this province were, on the whole, excellent, and have also defied the ordeal of Time. He restored the appoint-

ment of judges to the State, and made them independent of the popular voice; he restricted the powers of the *Justices de Paix*, irregular, ill-defined, and absurd, though he did not abolish an order of men very useful as a peace-making class; he strengthened the Courts of First Instance; and, above all, he formed many High Courts of Appeal, with some of the prerogatives of the old Parliaments, but administered not by a *noblesse de la robe*, but by functionaries of the central government, secured by law from arbitrary loss of office.

The reform of the judicial tribunals naturally led to the codification of the laws of France. These laws were a huge medley of edicts and customs, divided into two main parts: the first, composed of ancient usages existing in the regions north of the Loire; the second, mainly of Roman origin, predominating in the southern provinces. The whole system, although illustrated by the genius of able judges and writers, formed an enormous mass of obscure provisions, incrusted with the rubbish and dross of centuries, and unintelligible to ordinary minds; and, besides that it was behind the ideas of the age, it had clogged, and often frustrated, the course of justice. The National Assembly had undertaken the task of fusing into one organic structure this antique collection of rules of right, and of giving it a modern and scientific aspect; and it had gathered together a great deal of valuable materials on the subject, and had made important reports on it. Its labours, however, had long ceased; they were not continued, and were scarcely feasible in the

frightful confusion of the succeeding period; and the codification of the National Law had been scarcely begun at the 18th Brumaire. Napoleon earnestly took up this noble work, and though the conception of it does not belong to him, he brought it to a successful end; and it was one of his grandest, and most lasting achievements.

The First Consul placed the task in the hands of the most learned and experienced jurists of France, but he often presided at these commissions*; and his extraordinary intellectual powers are strikingly seen in the discussions that followed. The Code Civil, the first part of his work, dealing for the most part with the Rights of Persons, was published in 1801; but the labours of the Commissioners were prolonged for years, and it was near the close of the Emperor's reign before the last part was given to the world. The Code Napoleon, justly entitled to the name, is distributed into four divisions, the Code Civil, the Code de Commerce, the Code Penal, and the Code d'Instruction Criminelle; and it forms a complete text of the law of France, with improvements adapted to modern times, and freed from all that is feudal and obsolete. It is impossible to examine this masterpiece here; enough to say that it mainly adheres to the principles of the jurisprudence of Rome, yet it is not without special features

* The reader who studies the *Discussions sur le Code Civil* can have no doubt of this. Napoleon's faculty of searching analysis, and his strong practical sense are most remarkable. The chapter in his *Commentaries* on the Rights of Neutrals is a model of juridical reasoning and language.

of its own; compared to the laws of the Anglo-Saxon races, it breathes a somewhat despotic spirit, but it has found a perfectly congenial sphere in France, and its domain has extended far beyond her borders. "My code," their author said truly, "will outlive my victories"; his empire of the sword is a vision of the past, but these monuments of his creative genius still claim willing respect and obedience in regions around the Rhine and the Tiber.

National Education was another subject to which Napoleon turned his thoughts at this time. The instruction of the people under the Bourbon Monarchy had been for the most part left to the Church; and in France, as generally throughout the Continent, the humbler classes had grown up in ignorance. The National Assembly had sought to apply a remedy to this state of things, and it had decreed that every Commune should support a school in order to teach the first rudiments. This project, however, had not been carried out in a period of anarchy and of war with Europe; it never had a chance of success, and the Consulate found many Communes bankrupt, and the rising generation of young Frenchmen drawn off into the life of the camp. The First Consul did a good deal for elementary education, even in these circumstances; but the Communes were not taxed for primary schools, and the experiment, indeed, would have been a failure. He made great efforts, however, to promote higher education in different ways; he endowed a number of secondary schools, in which sons of the middle classes were carefully brought

up; he established excellent special schools to advance the military and other arts, and he founded a university, some years afterwards, which has had many eminent names in Letters and Science, though it was far too much a dependency of the State.

Still, learning could not flourish in the Napoleonic age; France, indeed, still feels the evil effects of the abolition of the great foundations and seminaries, which the Revolution destroyed, and it is the irony of fate that intellectual progress has been, to a certain extent, retarded by a movement ushered in by intellectual boasting. The First Consul was much more successful in encouraging merit by another method. He had, as we should never forget, strong sympathy with the ideas of the past; he appreciated the grandeur of the old order of feudal, kingly, and mediæval Europe; and he understood how vast was the influence of even its purely honorary rewards and dignities, as elements of "the cheap defence of nations." But orders of knighthood and distinctions of the kind had been exclusive privileges of the noble classes; the community had had no part in them; and it was a happy and most fruitful thought of Napoleon to create a national order of merit to which Frenchmen of every degree could aspire. He established the famous Legion of Honour; its rolls were thrown open to the deserving of all ranks and of all callings; and the success of the experiment has been decisive. It has encouraged excellence and probity in the State; and an institution of the kind has found a place in almost every country of Europe.

The greatest, however, by many degrees of these reforms was the final settlement of ecclesiastical affairs in France with the far-reaching and lasting results effected at this time by Napoleon. Objections certainly may be urged against the Concordat, as it has been justly named; but this arrangement of the relations between the State and the Church in the Revolutionary France of 1801–2, shows the commanding genius of the First Consul and his superiority to the ideas of the day. The Church of France, in the old *régime*, was a powerful and wealthy estate of the realm, as has been the case in all feudal monarchies, and many and grievous as had been its faults, it could boast a proud list of illustrious names. The National Assembly practically destroyed this great corporation on its temporal side, and it placed in its stead a salaried clergy, elective, and bound to an allegiance to the State, which, as we have seen, was fiercely resented. The Civil Constitution of the Church, as it was called, caused a widespread and deeply-marked schism; the non-juring priests, far the most numerous and best members of the sacerdotal body, who refused to take the oath of the law, had resisted the Revolution at every stage, even the conforming priests disliked it at heart; and both classes had had hundreds of victims during the Reign of Terror.

Napoleon, we have said, had put an end to the annoying persecution, which the Directory had occasionally exercised on the whole clergy; he had made a declaration of obedience to the State an equivalent for the obnoxious oath, and he had treated the

Church with marked respect and sympathy. All these, however, were passing expedients, and when the First Consul became supreme, he undertook the most arduous task of restoring ecclesiastical order in France, and of bringing it into accord with the civil power. The position of the Church, at this time, was a national danger, and a grave scandal; and it had largely ceased to perform its functions as a minister of good-will and peace, and as a beneficient social influence. Many of the non-juring bishops and priests had joined the *émigrés*, living abroad, and exercised an influence still powerful in denouncing the existing order of things in France; those who remained at home, if less openly hostile, detested all that happened since 1789; and even the conforming clergy were by no means loyal, though both classes recognised Napoleon's benefits. The Church therefore, was still more or less an enemy of the State, and gave it no moral support; and, besides that it was divided against itself, and torn by unseemly and bitter dissensions, it was in a condition of wild disorder after the anarchy of a revolutionary time. A great number of its priests had married in defiance of canonical law; its civil constitution and its elective principle had been declared sacrilegious at Rome; it was scarcely in communion with the Holy See, and, notwithstanding all that Napoleon had done, its services were abandoned in many places, where its altars remained unheeded and fallen. In whole parishes of France not a priest could be found to bless the child at the font, or to say a prayer for the dead.

Napoleon was keenly alive to the perils and evils of this position of affairs. A great ruler, he clearly perceived that a disaffected clergy, in foreign lands, was a standing menace to the welfare of France, and that a clergy that gave him no real support, could, at any moment, become his enemies; a profound thinker, he thoroughly understood the bad consequences of religious discord, and of the want of religious life in a nation. As he had shown, too, in his career in Egypt, he had a strong conviction of the existence of the Divine, and of the power of spiritual things in human affairs,* and he had deep reverence for the Catholic Church as a means of assuring social order and genuine sympathy with her time-honoured faith. After long negotiations with the Papal Court, where, notwithstanding intrigues and resistance, he found Pius VII. in the main, an ally, the Concordat was signed in the spring of

* Napoleon's writings abound in musings on religion; and it is absurd to describe them as insincere. I select, as a specimen, a single passage from an address to the clergy of Milan, made a few days before Marengo: "Moi, aussi, je suis philosophe, et je sais que, dans une société quelle qu'elle soit, nul homme ne saurait passer pour vertueux et juste s'il ne sait d'où il vient et où il va. Le simple raison ne saurait nous fixer la dessus; sans la religion on marche continuellement dans les ténèbres; et la religion catholique est la seule qui donne a l'homme des lumieres certaines et infaillibles sur son principe et sa fin dernière. Nulle société peut exister sans morale; il n'y pas de bonne morale sans religion: il n'y a donc que la religion qui donne à l'état un appui ferme et durable. Une société sans religion est comme un vaisseau sans boussole: un vaisseau, dans cet état, ne peut ni s'assurer de la route, ni espérer d'entrer au port. Une société sans religion toujours agitée, perpétuellement entravée par le choc des passions les plus violentes, éprouve en elle même toutes les fureurs d'une guerre intestine."—*Corr.*, tome vi., 339.

1802; and the Church of France was placed on a new foundation, and was reconciled alike with the State and with Rome.

By this great settlement the Catholic faith was declared to be that of the mass of the nation; a diocesan and parochial organisation was given to France differing largely from that before 1789; the clergy was everywhere restored to their altars, and they were encouraged to do their sacred offices without, hindrance, in all parts of the country. Absolution too, was extended to the married priests; a veil was thrown over the errors of the past, and the revived Church of France received its ancient honours and came into full communion with the Holy See. The supremacy of the State was, however, secured by provisions of the most stringent kind; the Gallican liberties were asserted again; the clergy was placed under the secular law; and as they had lost their lands, they were largely dependent on the government, to whom they owed their stipends. The appointment of the bishops was reserved to the head of the State; Napoleon insisted that all prelates non-juring or otherwise, should resign their offices and that he should reappoint them or not, as he pleased, and by these means the long-standing quarrel between the priestly orders was gradually closed. Perfect religious liberty was, at that time, declared to be the right of all Frenchmen, and Protestant and other dissident sects obtained the protection and support of the government. This settlement certainly made the Church a kind of spiritual agency of the State, in France, and it was strongly Erastian in aim and ten-

dencies. But it put an end to a dangerous state of things; it healed a festering schism and fierce discords; and it enthroned religion again in France, and connected it with the life of the nation. The Concordat still regulates the Church in France; it has secured religious peace in the State, and probably it is largely due to it, that a great Christian people has not become infidel.

In the eyes of the ignoble tribe of detractors these great reforms had no other object than to increase the dominant power of Napoleon. Undoubtedly the centralisation of local authority, and the re-establishment of the Church, in subjection to the State, conduced to despotism in many ways; and the reorganisation of the judicial system, the Code, and even the Legion of Honour in some degree had the same tendency. But the accidental is not the essential; if these measures strengthened a grand Dictatorship, they were conceived in the lasting interest of France, and time has given its sanction to their value as a whole. The legislation of the Consulate abolished much that was most noxious in the Revolution, and placed the interests it had formed on a safe basis; it bridged a perilous gulf between the past and the present, and all that is most stable in the institutions of France belongs to, or has been derived from it. These reforms entitle Napoleon to a place among the great founders of states and empires; and they remain monuments of his supreme genius, amidst the wrecks of his short-lived conquests.

Yet circumstance, in this, as in all instances, largely contributed to his wonderful success. France at this

time was as clay in the hands of the potter; the Revolution had effaced parts of the old structure of the national life, and had left the ruins scattered and confused; and she awaited the hand of a master-workman. If, too, it was Napoleon's distinctive merit that he turned a great opportunity to the best account, and that he perceived what were the needs of the State, the tendencies of Frenchmen broadly considered, fell in with the reforms he achieved. The decentralisation of 1789–90 was but a sudden reaction against abuses; and centralisation had been for centuries a cardinal fact in French history. The change wrought by Napoleon in the French Courts of Justice was largely a return to an old order of things, which, faulty as it was, had been respected; the Code effected that uniformity of the law, which had been the object of a long succession of jurists. It is unnecessary to point out that the Legion of Honour flattered self-esteem—a French national quality; and the Concordat harmonised, in many respects, with the real instincts and wishes of France. The mass of the people was at heart religious in 1800, 1801, and 1802, spite of the *philosophes* and the sceptics of Paris; the evils of sectarian schism and discord were deeply embedded in French traditions; the State and the Church had been allied in France for ages, and the nation had been always proud of its friendship with Rome.

But, if France welcomed the reforms of the Consulate, they encountered an opposition, more or less sincere, from the satellites of the power of Napoleon. The democratic ideas of 1789, and the infidel spirit

of the eighteenth century still had real influence among the men who, though, as moderates, they had hailed the 18th Brumaire, were yet prominent in the Revolution; and they were prevalent in the deliberative bodies of the State. A movement against the First Consul's measures, which found support, even in the Senate, had its origin in the Tribunate, and was felt in the Legislature; and loud complaints were heard that the administrative changes, and the Code Civil, were artful expedients to promote centralised despotic power. But the Concordat was the object of the fiercest attacks; it was a return to superstition and mediæval tyranny, and this opinion was held by most of the chiefs of the army, the survivors of the leaders of 1793, who had made war against altars and thrones. This sentiment was increased by the evident purpose of Napoleon to gather into his own hands authority of all kinds in the State; and, in fact, the Consulate, at this time, was rapidly becoming a scarcely veiled despotism.

Bickerings arose between Napoleon and the Assemblies; he proposed candidates to the Senate, under the Constitution, and these were rejected, and the Tribunate protested against the preamble and other parts of the Code Civil. Napoleon, already as domineering as Louis XIV. had been to his awed Parliaments, was meditating on putting all resistance down, when the obstacles in his way disappeared. The submissive Senate yielded at the first serious hint, and Cambacérès, by putting adroitly a gloss on a constitution which was being made a mere instrument for the ruler of France, eliminated from the

Tribunate and the Legislative Body the members who had been chiefly obnoxious. The military chiefs, too, obeyed their imperious commander, and open opposition had ere long ceased. The Concordat, however, remained an object of the dislike of the men who surrounded Napoleon; and, docile as they were, they did not conceal it. The Restoration of the Church in France was celebrated with solemn pomp at Nôtre Dame; and, at the First Consul's express instance, the Bodies of the State, and a large assemblage of officers of rank were in attendance. But the children of the Revolution did not belie their parent; the Holy Place had nothing Divine for them, and they beheld the ceremony with scorn and indifference.

We justly condemn the despotic attitude of Napoleon in this resistance to his will; but, if wrong in his means he was right in his ends, and his superiority to his followers is distinctly manifest. He properly insisted on carrying out reforms of immense and lasting value; and we see in him the deep thinking ruler, aware of the wishes and needs of France, very different from the scoffing sceptics and rude soldiers who tried to cross him. A general amnesty, with a few exceptions—the most notable of these was Pichegru, proscribed justly in the 18th Fructidor—to *émigrés* and exiles, closed the list of these constructive and healing measures; and they shed glory on the Consular era.

We turn to Napoleon's policy abroad, and here history pronounces a different verdict. The position of France was now so commanding, that Napoleon

ought to have made it his chief object not to vex or alarm foreign States by a sudden display or extension of power, and especially not to give umbrage to England, a most formidable and discontented enemy. He chose to take an opposite course, and though the climax had not been nearly reached, we begin to see in him a growing purpose to enlarge the sphere of the domination of France beyond reasonable, and even endurable, limits. One of his first acts was to annex Piedmont, in the midst of the existing general peace, and though something like this had been foreseen, it was not expected that he would convert an ancient kingdom into Departments of France. He turned his attention also to the rest of Italy; and his policy, in this respect, was very significant. The Treaty of Lunéville had enlarged the Cisalpine Republic, and Napoleon gave it the national name, as though it was intended for far higher destinies. But he took care that he should be made President, that is, ruler, of the Italian Republic; and as the Ligurian Republic and the Spanish kingdom of Tuscany were made dependent vassals, France, after laying her hands on Piedmont, had practically made the peninsula north of the Arno and up to the Adige a subject province. Domination had come in the place of ascendency, and this was indicated by the presence of great military roads, which, leading across the Alps into the valley of the Po, could transport a French army from Franche Comte and Provence in a few days to Milan and Turin. In the South, the Pope and the King of Naples owed their precarious thrones to the ruler of France; and the

fair vision of an independent Italy, presented by Napoleon, in 1796, to the imagination of self-deceived patriots, had proved a vain and delusive dream. He never really entertained any notions of the kind.

The First Consul, too, had not been less active in making France dominant in other parts of Europe, and even in stretching her arms to the New World. He had made the Batavian Republic a mere dependency, and had added the naval resources of a State, still renowned, to those of Rochefort, Brest, and Toulon. He had, in deference to the Czar and to the expressed wish of Germany—Marengo had been a terrible lesson—withdrawn his troops from the vantage-ground of Switzerland; but the anarchy of the Helvetian Republic and the pretensions of the aristocracy of Berne had led to another occupation by France; he mediated between the divided cantons, and though the arrangement he effected was well conceived and shows political insight of a high order,* it placed Switzerland again under French influence. Meanwhile he had sent a fleet and an army across the Atlantic to reduce St. Domingo, long emancipated from the French yoke; he had obtained Louisiana from feeble Spain, in exchange for the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, and had tried further to obtain Florida; and he boasted that France would become once more the powerful maritime and colonial

* Napoleon did not, and indeed could not, understand the play of free political institutions. But he saw, as clearly perhaps as Montesquieu, the tendency of political systems, and he was skilled in the mechanism of politics. His addresses to the Swiss Deputies are most remarkable. *Corr.*, tome viii., p. 124, 188.

State she had been before the Seven Years' War. The Peace of Lunéville, however, as he had partly foreseen, gave him his best opportunity at this juncture to enlarge the limits of French supremacy. The Treaty had, we have seen, indirectly provided for the indemnity, out of the great German Bishoprics, of the Princes, who had lost territory in Italy and Germany, by cessions to France; and this had led to angry disputes between the German Powers, unable to agree in the division of the spoil, the old rivalry of Austria and Prussia appearing once more in full relief, and the greed of Prussia being specially manifest. The First Consul was invited to intervene, and he intervened as Richelieu had done, and Mazarin, before the Peace of Westphalia, but with more authority, and apparent effect. His mediation was attended with success; he apportioned domains between his expectant clients, and the general principle he followed was to create a kind of new balance of power in Germany, increasing Bavaria and Prussia, and weakening Austria—the settled policy of France for centuries—and making the Lesser States her dependents. This policy may have tended to unite Germany, the dread of Frenchmen from Henry IV. to Thiers, but for the present it made France the arbiter and controller of German affairs, and it seemed a masterpiece of far-sighted statecraft. In order not to offend the world too much, Napoleon had prayed the young Czar to assist him, as a co-operator in a great work of peace; but the First Consul directed everything; he had skilfully made use of a mask for his policy.

France had thus become infinitely more formidable than when William III., a century before, had combined the Grand Alliance against Louis XIV. Her territory had been enlarged by Piedmont only, but she had consolidated and greatly augmented her power; and Germany had suddenly felt her overmastering influence. Indeed, though her dominions were increased afterwards, she was more really strong, and was far more prosperous, than she became under the succeeding Empire. Her military resources were still growing; her best youth had not yet been wasted, in hecatombs, in gigantic wars; and the exhausted continent bowed to her will, reluctant indeed, but afraid to strike. At home she flourished under the rule of a great, able, and enlightened despotism, the inherent evils of which were as yet undeveloped. Her revenue had immensely increased; her credit had revived, and stood high; the Funds which, before Marengo, were not above 10, had risen to between 40 and 50; her public debt was paid, and her finances prospered. Her trade and manufactures, too, half destroyed by war, had begun to show vigorous life again; and the fall of Feudalism, which had set the land free, had given her agriculture a powerful impulse. Great results had followed, also, from the putting down of lawlessness, from the opening of new roads and canals, from religious peace, from a growing sense of security, from an improved administration of local affairs, from more regularity in the course of justice, in short, from the First Consul's domestic reforms; and the people, sick of Revolutionary phrases,

had turned from the Rights of Man to energetic industry.

France enjoyed glory, order, repose, and wealth, in a combination never seen again; and if the ideas of 1789 had vanished, nay, were discredited by a nation which, of all others, suddenly passes to opposite extremes of conduct, she had extraordinary and very real welfare. Yet this display of grandeur had a dark side, though even keen observers could not yet see it. France had nothing resembling a free government; she had no guarantees for stability in the State; she depended for everything on one great man, unchecked, supreme, and in fine a Dictator. Napoleon had raised her out of the depths of disaster; might he not launch her on paths that would lead to ruin? His attitude to the world was even now menacing; and his government at home had begun to show some of the distinctive marks of despotic power—a Press in bondage, an Inquisitorial Police, the spy and the informer in constant mission. It was, perhaps, the most distinctive mark of all, that Napoleon had many able ministers—Talleyrand and Maret for Foreign Affairs, both diplomatists of the first order—and Berthier, who had replaced Carnot, the former Director, at the War Office—and yet that he treated these distinguished men as mere subordinates to carry out his behests.

At this moment, however, France, as a nation, was one in heart and mind with Napoleon, and regarded him as a beneficent saviour. A general sentiment found expression that the First Consul was worthy of a more exalted station; and this was blended

with a confused notion, that the institutions of France ought to be made more stable. The commanding position of the Head of the State, and the character of his recent measures, seemed to justify, in the eyes of many, the establishment of a new and reformed monarchy; and, indeed, in this, as in other matters, the Revolution could not blot out the past. This idea found favour in Napoleon's family, eager to rise to princely rank and distinction, though Joséphine, one of the old *régime*, sighed at heart for the return of the Bourbons; and it was approved in several Continental Courts. France, however, as a whole, had not forgotten the faults and abuses of the ancient state of things; and Paris and its society, the Bodies of State, and the army detested the name of king. An expedient was devised, which was deemed sufficient to satisfy an almost universal wish. Napoleon, after the 18th Brumaire, had been named First Consul for ten years, and the Senate proposed to extend this period to ten years further from 1802–3. The ruler of France, however, studiously stood apart, as he had done in 1796 and 1799, and no doubt from the same motive; but he intimated that he would not accept this overture; and the difficulty was removed by Cambacérès, one of the most ingenious satellites of power.

The philosophy of Rousseau was made to serve its turn; and an appeal was made to the sovereign people, to declare Napoleon First Consul for life, with power to choose and appoint a successor. France assented by an almost unanimous vote, and acclaimed the new dignity of the master of her choice. The

change was followed by fresh amendments of the Constitution, already a mask of despotism. The Senate had exercised a dispensing power, and even a legislative power, on more than one occasion; but it now obtained in substance, a right to make laws, and even to interfere with the course of justice, in addition to its existing rights: the Legislative Body became a phantom; and the Tribunate was reduced to a mere Department, little differing from the Council of State. The work of Sieyès had thus been turned into a convenient means to surround Napoleon with docile servitors; the trappings which had veiled despotism, in part, fell off; and at the very time when restraint was most needed, France was committed to the hands of an unchecked autocrat. The lists of notables were abolished, as restricting the choice of the government for the public service; but the nation received no additional rights.

The sudden and vast aggrandisement of the power of France necessarily gave umbrage to the one State which still lifted up its head in Europe. The annexation of Piedmont, the subjection of Italy, the complete ascendency of France in Germany, the growth of the maritime power of the French Republic, through its control over the resources of Holland, and the settlement of Switzerland under French influence, provoked anger and alarm in England; and the circumstance that these menacing events had taken place in universal peace, only aggravated and embittered the sentiment. The Addington ministry and the majority in Parliament were still strongly opposed to a rupture with France and her powerful

master; but a war party in the House of Commons gained strength; the nation felt that danger was near, and that it would be forced to defend itself and the Continent; and nothing, indeed, could be more untenable than an argument, urged at the time by Napoleon, that England had no right to a voice in the matter, as she had not recognised the new States which had been set up as vassals of France, and the Treaty of Amiens did not provide for Piedmont. The elements of distrust, suspicion, and ill-will were not slow to arise in the case of two nations, deadly foes of late years, and for ages rivals; and a series of occurrences inflamed the quarrel.

Pitt, a statesman still misunderstood in France, and zealous for peace throughout his career, kept steadily aloof from warlike counsels; but the language of his followers was violent in the extreme, and Lord Grenville and Canning spoke ominous words. The Press, too, teemed with invectives against Napoleon; ferocious pamphlets were written by passionate *émigrés*, who abused the right of asylum in England; and George Cadoudal and some of his adherents of La Vendée, undoubtedly conspirators of the worst kind, continued, it is said, to receive pensions from the British government for past services. On the other hand, Napoleon assumed a most arrogant attitude, and seemed to show a determination to provoke a rupture. Incensed at the criticism of a free Press, an institution he could not understand, and at the hesitation of the Ministry to comply with his demands as regards the *émigrés*, Cadoudal and his crew, he retaliated in a fierce and

reckless fashion; and the *Moniteur*, the organ of the State, was filled with papers, some from his own pen, which held England up to execration and contempt. Some of his diplomatic correspondence abounded in threats and boastful assertions of his own power; and one of these letters * reveals designs of conquest and domination that justified all that the war party in England had said against him. Nor did he confine himself to words; he despatched emissaries to our coasts to observe and report, evidently with a view to an intended descent; the dockyards of France and her circle of allies exhibited sudden and extreme activity; and he sent an officer of rank to Egypt to examine a region which he still hoped to conquer and make a French province.

In this state of affairs there was scarcely a hope that the Peace of Amiens could be of long duration. Malta was the occasion, but hardly the cause, of the first open dispute between France and England. The island, we have seen, was to be returned to the Knights under the protectorate of one of the Powers of Europe; and the British government, in the first instance, was ready, nay eager, to carry out the treaty. But the Czar refused to become protector; a Grand Master, chosen by the Pope, to be head of the order, would not accept the office; and French

* This despatch is not in the Napoleon correspondence, but Thiers quotes from it as genuine. I have space for a few words only. "Le Premier Consul n'a que trente trois ans, il n'a encore detruit que des États de second ordre! Qui sait ce qu'il lui faudrait de temps, s'il y était forcé pour changer de nouveau la face de l'Europe, et resusciter l'Empire d'Occident?" See also the *Correspondance*, tome viii., 219, 247, 250, 304, 319, 328.

diplomatists were lukewarm and slow in suggesting expedients for a fresh arrangement. Meanwhile the prodigious increase of the power of France, and the aggressive attitude of the First Consul, had exasperated the public mind in England; and the war party insisted on the retention of Malta, as an equivalent for French annexations and conquests. Lord Hawkesbury, the Foreign Minister, dropped a hint, in an interview with a French envoy, that England would have to take precautions, the state of the Continent had been so greatly changed; and Napoleon replied by a peremptory demand for the evacuation of the island by the British garrison.

A long diplomatic correspondence followed; but the Ministry, eager for peace, and with a just regard to treaties, would probably have complied with the First Consul's request, had not circumstances suddenly changed their purpose. The French officer, who had been sent to Egypt, made a report insinuating that our commander on the spot had been privy to a plot against his life; he added significantly that it would only require six thousand Frenchmen to conquer the country; and Napoleon published this in the official *Moniteur*, as though he intended to defy England. This was followed by conduct even more aggressive; in a formal message to the Bodies of State, the First Consul announced that "England by herself was not able to cope with France"; and in the presence of a great official circle he addressed Lord Whitworth, the English ambassador, in vehement language that approached an insult. This series of threats and injurious acts provoked a gen-

eral explosion of wrath in England; Malta was kept to prevent a French descent on Egypt; and war in fact had become certain. Napoleon seems to have perceived that he was in the wrong; he made several attempts to negotiate; but he refused to accept the terms of England, which revealed distrust, and had become onerous, under the stress of national indignation and passion. War was declared between the two countries in May, 1803.

The conduct of Napoleon, in this passage of his career, apparently presents a most striking contrast. His policy at home is still, in the main, beneficent; he gives France wise and lasting reforms; he is, on the whole, an enlightened ruler. His policy abroad is one of aggression and craft; he seeks the aggrandisement of France, whatever the risk; he provokes a most dangerous quarrel with England. Yet this seeming opposition is easy to understand, if we consider his position and that of Europe. If never a statesman of the highest order, Napoleon was an administrator of the rarest genius; he had the insight to see what were the needs of France, and never perhaps was the difficult task of putting the old wine into the new bottles more successfully accomplished than in his efforts to bring the Revolution into harmony with the past and to establish religious and social peace. Yet even in these he shakes off restraints on his power, and we see the figure of the uncontrolled despot appear amidst prosperity and social order.

He looked at the Continent with a conqueror's eye; he believed that it offered a safe field for his

own domination and that of France; and, indeed, he encountered so little resistance, nay, his intervention was so sought for, that we can hardly feel surprised if he thought all was possible, and if he forgot that it was, in the main, his enemy. His worst mistake was his breach with England, and in this we see conspicuously, for the first time, one of his most distinctive and notable faults, contempt of national movements and passions, though certainly this was not surprising, for his experience of all that was called national in Italy, and even in France, could not command respect. Unable to see that a great and proud people stood behind a weak and precarious government, he thought that threatening the Ministry would overawe England, and he embarked recklessly in a contest with a Power, the resources of which were not unknown to him, and which for ages had been the soul of formidable coalitions against France. War with England opened a long vista of perils and obstacles not to be foreseen; and if he could rely on his power and his genius, he ought never in the existing position of France, to have risked her grandeur on such a hazard. As to the merits of the disputes which led to the rupture, Napoleon had some just grounds of complaint, but his domineering arrogance cannot be justified. On the other hand, the retention of Malta was a technical breach of a solemn Treaty; but the real fault of the British government was that its conduct was feeble and halting; had it firmly taken its stand on the principle of international right in the existing state of Europe, Napoleon possibly might have

yielded. The war was the cause of world-wide calamities; it was to raise France to the highest point of glory; it was to place Napoleon, on the stage of events, in the grandest and yet most terrible aspect, but it was to end in Waterloo and St. Helena. As for England it was to expose her to the gravest dangers, and, if it brought her splendid success at last, it arrested her social progress for years.

CHAPTER VI.

Character of the war between England and France—Vast preparations of Napoleon for invading England—The flotilla—The camp of Boulogne—Conspiracy of George Cadoudal—Execution of the Duc d'Enghien—Effects of this deed in Europe—Movement in France to make the power of the First Consul hereditary—Establishment of the Empire—Its civil and military functionaries—Coronation of Napoleon—His projects to cover the flotilla by a fleet in the Channel—Cruise of Villeneuve—Coalition formed against Napoleon—He marches from Boulogne to attack Austria—Reflections.

RANCE and England, after the declaration of war rushed furiously to arms in a death struggle. Two events had stirred national passions to their depths; British men-of-war had, without formal notice, captured French traders on the high seas, and Napoleon had detained and even imprisoned British subjects who happened to be in France. The First Consul made preparations at once to cross the narrow sea and to invade England, and his design was one of gigantic proportions. Five years ago he had, we have seen, deemed the

existing resources of France inadequate; but the project of a descent on England had, since the days of Louis XIV., been a favourite idea at the French War Office, and he had informed Lord Whitworth that he would make the attempt. The military and the naval power of France and of a large part of the Continent was now concentrated in a great despot's hands; nothing seemed insuperable to the victorious soldier, who had made the barrier of the Alps fall, and Napoleon, though he had weighed the risks, believed that he could "force the wet ditch of the Channel," and appear on the seaboard of Kent in irresistible force. France answered his summons with exulting pride, and made immense efforts to second his purpose. The Senate and the obsequious Bodies of the State overflowed with addresses of loyal acclaim, as had happened in the American War; the chief cities and towns of France made gifts of war ships to increase the fleet, and many of the Departments freely taxed themselves to exhibit their ardour against the ancient enemy.

It is idle to represent a great national movement as a factitious effort of arbitrary power compelling the assent of an enslaved people; the same has been said of the mighty exertions of France in 1793 and in 1870–71; and, indeed, Napoleon commanded the hearts of Frenchmen for many years after this period. It is a striking proof of the extraordinary growth of the prosperity of France, since the 18th Brumaire, and of the excellence of her financial system, that she proved perfectly able, at this crisis, to bear the

enormous strain of a great maritime war and of preparations on a colossal scale; and thus to belie the predictions of British statesmen. Napoleon, indeed, acquired large funds by the sale of Louisiana to the United States; he compelled Spain to yield him an ample subsidy; and, as had been the case before, he extracted a tribute from the vassal States of the supreme Republic. But the charge of the contest fell mainly on France, and yet her taxation was but slightly raised, and the danger and waste of loans were avoided.

Napoleon's preparations to effect the descent continued for more than two years. His design was possibly too vast, like more than one of his military designs; he underrated the power and the spirit of England; he had no experience in naval affairs; he did not possess the technical knowledge essential in an enterprise of the kind; and his efforts ended in a disastrous failure. What he accomplished, however, remains a monument of his comprehensive genius in war, of his characteristic organising powers, of his extraordinary gifts in arranging details, of his indefatigable and most fruitful energy, of his distinctive and peculiar skill in stratagem, and of his passionate and unchanging hatred of England; and, to a certain extent, he attained success, more nearly than is commonly supposed. The rulers of France who had gone before him had never contemplated invading England with more than thirty or forty thousand men, and the invasion was to be a diversion only; he resolved to attack with one hundred and sixty thousand, and with a mighty blow to

strike down the power, which he described as the "oppressor of France for ages." His fleets, however, and those of his allies, were not to be compared to those of his foe; and by what means and under what conditions was he to transport across the Channel a force far more numerous than had hitherto appeared, in a single army, on any field in Europe?

His first care was to increase and strengthen his naval squadrons by all means in his power; the army he had sent to St. Domingo had fallen a victim to tropical disease, but the ships had safely returned to port; men-of-war were rapidly built and fitted out in the dockyards of France and of her dependents; nothing was left undone to obtain crews; and Antwerp was selected, with true insight, to form a great centre of naval construction and a base of operations of the first order. After several months of incessant toil, the marine of France, which had been almost ruined before the Peace of Amiens, had begun to revive; Toulon and even Rochefort possessed fleets; and two formidable squadrons, at Brest and the Texel, one capable of bearing thirty thousand soldiers, were given the name of "The Wings of the Army of England." Meanwhile masses of troops had been drawn together and placed in camps along the sea-coast extending from Brest to Calais and Dunkirk, other divisions being in the interior; and this great armament, ultimately one hundred and thirty thousand strong, was destined to converge to the shores of Picardy, and to strike the stroke that was to prove decisive.*

* Napoleon's attempt to invade England, and the results were of supreme importance to his own fortunes and to those of the world, and

A word must be said on the means employed to ferry across the Channel this large force, the "Main Body of the Army of England." Along the banks of the chief rivers which fall into the sea from the Scheldt to the Garonne, small vessels were built at available places, and were brought down to the coast in hundreds. These craft were composed of three classes: light pinnaces to carry the van of the army, larger boats to convey the succeeding divisions, and heavy barges for the *impedimenta* of war; but all the classes had flat bottoms, were comparatively of small draught, were capable of being propelled by sails and oars, and for their size, were powerfully armed with cannon. The elements of a gigantic flotilla were thus formed, and the scattered constructions were by degrees drawn together from a variety of points, arrayed in squadrons, and brought along the coast to the places where the army was to embark. Careful precautions were taken to protect these divisions on the passage from attacks of the enemy, by placing batteries on assailable spots, and by distributing horsemen along the seaboard; and though the whole flotilla was never assembled, for

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have perhaps received less attention than they deserve. An excellent sketch of the purely naval operations will be found in Admiral Colomb's *Naval Warfare*; it is little more than an abstract, but it is very valuable. I cannot, however, concur with Admiral Colomb's view that possibly Napoleon did not really intend to invade England; he certainly hesitated and changed his plans, but he had a settled purpose to effect the descent. I would also refer to the admirable work of Admiral de la Graviére, *Guerres Maritimes sous la République et l'Empire*; the extracts from the diary of Villeneuve are most instructive.

some headlands could not be doubled, still the vast number of two thousand three hundred vessels, manned by upwards of fifteen thousand seamen, and carrying about three thousand guns, were ultimately collected along the coast extending from Étaples and Ambleteuse, within sight of Dungeness and Folkestone. Immense preparations had, meanwhile, been made to provide for the safety of this vast armament; the beds of the Liane and the Canche had been deepened, widened, and made navigable, a great central basin had been constructed at Boulogne, with quays, and all the appliances of a port; and every little roadstead had been turned to account and placed under the guns of batteries, to cover the squadron contained in it.

Before the end of 1804, the shores around Boulogne presented an array of armed vessels, extending for miles and ready to put to sea, and the efforts made by the British cruisers to destroy or to injure this menacing force, had been attended with no success. Meantime Napoleon had brought together and collected into four great camps, between Arras, Montreuil, and Boulogne, the masses of troops, intended to effect the passage; and extraordinary care was taken to arrange the details for the embarkation and the subsequent descent. Every fraction of the army had its allotted place in the part of the flotilla assigned to it; the sea and land forces were trained to act in concert, and nothing was left untried by repeated efforts to assure regularity, order, and speed, in placing men, horses, and the material of war, in the assemblage of transports arrayed for the

purpose, and in making the means of invasion certain. The rivalry and ardour of soldiers and sailors were kept up by frequent reviews, and by spirit-stirring harangues and addresses; and their vigour was increased by continual exercise in the construction of the works at the great camp of Boulogne. The master-mind of the First Consul, directed the whole enterprise down to its smallest details.

England had looked on, for a time, unmoved at these preparations to invade her shores. Her fleets had blockaded the ports of France; she had squadrons off the Irish and Dutch coasts, and she guarded the Channel by a few war ships, for the most part of inferior size and by petty armed craft not in large numbers. The idea of a descent was, at first, ridiculed; the Admiralty and its trained advisers, aware of the difficulties caused by winds and tides, believed that the flotilla could not make the passage, and, in any event, they conceived that the attacking force would not exceed a few thousand men. But confidence gave place by degrees to alarm, when Boulogne and the surrounding region had been changed into huge leaguers containing tens of thousands of armed men assembled almost within sight of Dover; when an immense array of vessels, whose powerful guns had successfully resisted many hostile efforts, had been collected in the narrow sea; and when a great tempest of war had gathered together from Brittany to the flats of Holland.

The nation, however, was equal to itself; the army, though fallen from its old renown, and ill organised, was largely increased; the militia was

called out to support it, and volunteers eagerly flocked in thousands to defend the natal soil from wrong and aggression. More than two hundred thousand men were arrayed in arms, and though these troops and levies were not to be compared to the veteran and practised legions of France, they were by no means contemptible foes, and had they been well directed, they could have resisted an invasion, which could only have been an unsupported raid in any event, far more formidably than Napoleon supposed. Meantime something was done to protect the Channel; but this vital point was, at no time, guarded by a naval force in really great strength, and no English seaman entertained a thought that a hostile fleet in largely superior numbers, could be brought into the narrow seas and be made to cover the flotilla on its way to our shores. The traditions, in truth, of the complete failure of D'Orvilliers in 1779, of the First of June, of the Nile, of Camperdown, were all powerful in the minds of Englishmen, and menacing as the flotilla was felt to be, it was not imagined that it could obtain the assistance of French squadrons in British waters. The belligerents, in fact, were each too confident of superiority within their respective domains. Napoleon never doubted but that if he once could land the mass of his army on the shores of England, he would dictate peace amidst conquered London, and yet not improbably he would have found a Moscow. Nelson and St. Vincent assumed that a great French fleet could, in no event, makes its way to the Channel; and yet they were very nearly mistaken.

While Napoleon had thus been "devouring the obstacles" lying in the way of his great enterprise, a wicked plot had been formed against his life. George Cadoudal and his band had, we have seen, remained in England after the Peace of Amiens, and the renewal of the war gave the conspirators hopes of striking with effect at the First Consul. La Vendée, however, had been pacified; it was impossible to stir up civil war in France, and all that remained was to slay the infernal usurper, who stood in the path of the King by the grace of God. It was resolved to murder Napoleon, in the open day, when attended by a few of his friends only, and nothing shows more clearly the perverted judgment of more than one of Napoleon's detractors, than that writers have been found who have accepted the plea that this was not assassination but a fair combat. Meetings were regularly held to further the project, and as it was evidently necessary to gain over the army if a Bourbon Restoration was to follow the crime, overtures were made to Moreau, for some time a secret enemy of the First Consul, through Pichegru, who, we have seen, had been excluded from the great recent amnesty, and through other agents of an inferior order. The British government, it is unnecessary to say, was wholly unaware of these counsels of blood, though unhappily, as we have seen, it had Cadoudal and some of his adherents in its pay, on account of services in the late war, and Louis XVIII., at this time at Warsaw, refused, to his honour, to be privy to them. But the brother of the Pretender, the Comte d'Artois, and leading men of the *émigré*

fanatics, undoubtedly took part in the plot generally; and the Comte d'Artois was certainly more than once present at the conspirators' hidden and nightly conclaves.

Cadoudal and several of his murderous band made their way to Paris to carry out their design in the winter of 1803–4; they were followed by Rivière and two Polignacs, noble and trusted friends of the Comte d'Artois, and foremost in the highest ranks of the *émigrés;* and Pichegru, Cadoudal, and Moreau met and discussed the fall of the Consular government, though Moreau seems to have been averse to an atrocious crime. The conspiracy gradually became divulged, and was discovered mainly through Napoleon's efforts; and the disclosures made by some of Cadoudal's crew led to the unexpected arrest of Moreau. Ere long Cadoudal himself, Rivière, and the Polignacs, and finally Pichegru were arrested, and if the Royalists in Paris feigned scepticism, it was placed beyond doubt that a far-reaching plot had existed to slay the ruler of France. Moreau was sentenced to imprisonment after a fair trial, but Napoleon allowed him to go to America. Cadoudal was justly sent to the scaffold; his three noble satellites were condemned to death; yet here, too, Napoleon showed himself merciful, and he granted the culprits a free pardon. Pichegru had strangled himself meanwhile in prison, and it is idle to lay his death to the First Consul's charge.

The conduct of Napoleon up to this point had been equally just and clement. Cadoudal and Moreau were rightly convicted, and history would

not have uttered a word of censure if Rivière and the Polignacs had been sent to death, nay if their guilty patron, the Comte d'Artois, had been involved in the same doom, had he fallen into the hands of the Head of the State. These proceedings, in fact, bore a striking resemblance to the Jacobite plots against William III., and we know how they were dealt with by British justice, far less merciful than the First Consul. Unfortunately, however, at this conjuncture Napoleon took a course and committed acts which, palliate them as we may in a certain measure, must nevertheless be sternly condemned by every candid and well-informed enquirer. During the investigations before the late trials, it had repeatedly been deposed that a Bourbon Prince was to join the conspirators in the French Capital, and as it was supposed that this person was the Comte d'Artois, a watch was set on the spot where it was believed that D'Artois, then in England, would land on the coast of Normandy. This mission, however, having proved fruitless, Napoleon turned his eyes on the different members of the House of Bourbon in other parts of Europe, and his attention fixed itself on the Duc d'Enghien, a young scion of the princely stem of Condé, at this time quietly living at Ettenheim, in the Duchy of Baden, near the banks of the Rhine. The report of a spy, despatched to observe the Duc and his movements, raised the suspicions of the First Consul to the highest pitch, and urged him to form a fatal purpose. An English agent called Smith, charged to make enquiries about the descent, was not far from Baden; meetings of *émigrés* had been held

near Ettenheim, and the spy, making a disastrous mistake, declared that Smith and Dumourier—the chief of Valmy, but banished from France since 1793—had been lately in the house of the Duc, who, the spy added, had been more than once in Strasburg.

This fell like a revelation on Napoleon's mind; the Bourbon prince was discovered, and a fresh band of plotters; and bodies of armed men were at once despatched to enter the territory of Baden to seize D'Enghien and to send him to Paris a close prisoner. The order was only too well obeyed, and after the arrest of the ill-fated young man, his papers were placed in Napoleon's hands. They certainly contained some questionable words, but they were incompatible with murderous guilt, and it was soon discovered that the tale of the spy about Smith and Dumourier was a complete error. Napoleon, however, had resolved to make an example and to terrify the Bourbons and all that belonged to them; and, wholly changing the nature of the charge, he caused an accusation to be preferred against the Duc of having been an *émigré* in arms against France, and of being disaffected to the Consular government, an accusation no doubt true, but not the one that had led to the arrest. The Duc d'Enghien was hurriedly taken to Vincennes, was arraigned at the dead of night on this new indictment, before a military commission told off for the purpose, and was shot within two hours, after a mock trial, in which the accused was left without means of defence.

Some excuses may, in justice, be urged to extenuate the guilt of this deed of blood. The dread of

murder shook the iron nerves of Cromwell, and murder had been brought before the mind of the First Consul during many months. The invasion of Baden by French troops was an audacious violation of the rights of neutrals; but, not to refer to Napoleon in 1796 and 1797, the rights of neutrals were, in this age, trampled under foot by most of the great powers of Europe. The time, too, was one of atrocious acts—of the execution of Carracioli, of Murat, of Ney—and the death of the Duc d'Enghien was not so grave a crime as the assassination of the ambassadors of France at Rastadt. It is most remarkable, besides, that Talleyrand, a sagacious and a calm-minded man, was at least consenting to D'Enghien's fate, nay, perhaps directly took part in the deed; the scornful denial that appears in Talleyrand's *Memoirs* does not refute a charge sustained by much proof. But, when all has been said, the Duc d'Enghien sits heavily on Napoleon's memory, and, like the victims of Richard before Bosworth, this phantom is still a living accuser. There seems to be no value in the imaginary pleas that the First Consul intended to commute the sentence, or that an accident delayed the appearance at Vincennes of a functionary charged to report on the trial, and to restrain the Commission at the last moment; and the facts converge to a plain conclusion.

Napoleon was not cruel, as his whole life shows; but he had determined to strike down conspirators: he was inexorable when he had made up his mind, and he resolved to sacrifice the Duc d'Enghien in order to teach Bourbon plotters a lesson. He did

not scruple, with this end in view, to bring the Prince within the scope of a charge, far-fetched and nearly obsolete, if technically correct, but from which there was no possible escape; to hand him over to a tribunal, which, he well knew, would be bound by no law and would show no mercy; and to do his prisoner to death for reasons of state. This, indeed, is Napoleon's account of the matter, recorded in his will in his last moments: "I caused the Duc d'Enghien to be arrested and convicted, because this was necessary for the security, the interests, and the honour of the French people, at a time when the Comte d'Artois, by his own admission, supported sixty assassins in Paris. In similar circumstances I would act in the same way again." *

The tragic death of the Duc d'Enghien led ultimately to another league against France; but it seemed at first to have but slight results. Prussia, indeed, gorged with the spoils of Lunéville, and wistfully looking to Napoleon for more, withdrew from the formal alliance with France, which she had been meditating for some time; and Russia assumed a menacing attitude. The young Czar and his Court went into deep mourning—a grotesque exhibition after the fate of Paul; his ministers uttered solemn protests against the violation of the rights of Baden; and

* *Comment.*, tome v., p. 495, Ed. 1867. The death of the Duc d'Enghien is perhaps the darkest incident in Napoleon's career, and ultimately led to important consequences. Those who care to study the subject fully may read the valuable works of Nongarède de Fayet and Welschinger, the last very able but unjust to the First Consul, and perhaps to Talleyrand. The evidence will be found summed up in the *Edinburgh Review* of April, 1889.

Alexander, who had been compelled to play an inferior part in the late settlement of German affairs, by the ruler of France, sought to appear a champion of an injured Germany. These demonstrations, however, came to nothing; Austria, the Head of the Empire, took care not to interfere on behalf of one of the Lesser States; and, indeed, the only use she made of an occasion of trouble was to aggrandise herself, and to extend her possessions. The Continent, in fact, though indignant at heart, was still so overawed by the power of Napoleon, that the mere death of a Bourbon was not sufficient to cause it to run the risks of war; and, indeed, on the imperious summons of the First Consul, it consented to the banishment of Smith, and of other English agents, who, like him, had been given the task of obtaining information about the descent, just as Napoleon, at this very time, had agents in Ireland to stir up a rebellion. The only important effects of the tragedy of Vincennes, for some months, were apparently two; plots, like those of Cadoudal altogether ceased, and, indeed, were never heard of again; and Napoleon's calculations in this respect were verified. The second consequence was of greater moment; the government and the institutions of France depended on the existence of the First Consul; and what would happen if an assassin's knife destroyed him before he had named a successor? Another strong movement began to impel France, already in the hands of a great ruler, already feeling the approach of monarchy; and a sentiment grew up in the more enlightened classes, and thence passed into the mass of the

nation, that the time had arrived when it had become necessary to raise Napoleon to an hereditary throne, to establish the Revolution on a monarchic basis, and still further to close the divisions between the Republic and the old order of Europe.

This movement, general and spontaneous—it is vain to deny its real nature,—made its way into the Bodies of the State, and especially into the docile Senate, eager to anticipate a master's wishes, though these sons of the Revolution, in many instances, still retained their inveterate dislike to Royalty. Fouché, indeed, lately dismissed from the Ministry of Police, was the only one of the leading men in Paris who urged Napoleon to ascend the throne—his motives were sufficiently plain, and Cambacérès even made objections. But Napoleon's purpose was already formed, his ambition had step by step advanced to the thought of an Empire of the West, with France supreme over a subject Europe; and he seized the opportunity offered by fortune. Except Russia, the Powers of the Continent welcomed with feigned or sincere pleasure the announcement that monarchy was to be restored in France, and the army exulted at the new title of its chief, if some military leaders were, perhaps, unwilling. The Tribunate was the first of the Bodies of the State to vote the First Consul to his august dignity; the protest of Carnot was not thought of amidst adulation that knew no bounds, and the Senate, hurrying to the spot to bow down and worship, hailed Napoleon Emperor of the French at St. Cloud, the scene of the 18th Brumaire, now well-nigh forgotten.

The institutions of the new Empire require but little notice; the boasted Constitution of the year VIII. had proved simply an egg to hatch Despotism, and all that remained was to hide away the shell in the trappings and pomp of Imperial splendour. Napoleon was declared Sovereign of the French People; in default of male children, the succession to the crown was limited to his brothers Joseph and Louis, Lucien, the old President of the Five Hundred, and the youngest brother, Jerôme, being excluded for having married beneath their rank; but the Emperor was given the right to adopt a successor, as had been the case when he was First Consul. The throne was surrounded by Grand Dignitaries, resembling the Electors of the German Cæsars, but composed of prominent men of the Consulate—Cambacérès, Lebrun, and four others, and the magnificence of the old monarchy of France reappeared in a host of grand officers, of high functionaries, and of attendants of a Court who revived the memories of the glories of Versailles. The Empire, however, was one of the sword, and its main prop, the army, was represented in it by an array of marshals and distinguished generals, future ennobled paladins of a new era. As for the institutions of the Consular time, the Senate acquired additional powers, and the Tribunate was before long suppressed; but for some years these had only been the instruments of an all-controlling ruler, and they almost pass out of the sight of history. Napoleon stood supreme above this assemblage of newly-formed and dependent dignities, and he retained the whole administration

of the State in his hands, for his ministers remained his mere subordinates. The approbation of the nation had been so manifest, that an appeal was made to it only on the single question, if the Empire was to be of an hereditary type.

Paris flocked to behold the Coronation on the 2d of December, 1804. The German Cæsars, in the ancient rite, had crossed the Alps to wait on the Pontiff, but Pius VII. had come from Rome, that nothing should be wanting in Napoleon's honour. The old man had left the Vatican in fear and trembling, but he had been greeted with respect and delight in the Infidel Land and the Godless City, which a few years before had risen in revolt against the altars and thrones of Christendom. He had been received at the Tuileries with the pomp of sovereigns, and Napoleon and Joséphine had, in secret, invoked his blessing on their marriage vows, which, according to Revolutionary law, had been sanctioned only by a functionary of the State. On the day of the ceremony, Pius left the Palace, accompanied by a long array of the higher clergy of the new-born Church of France, and as the procession passed through the streets and along the stately ways of the capital to the antique fane of the good St. Louis, cheers burst from the multitudes, which had lately beheld Robespierre doing homage to the Supreme Being, and Pagan orgies offered to the Powers of the Seasons. The interior of Nôtre Dame had been draped with tapestry, bright with the golden bees of the Imperial soldier, which concealed the ravages of the neglect of the Commune, and as the

Pontiff was met at the high altar by the Prelates of the sixty dioceses of France, solemn music and hundreds of voices joined in the chant, which commemorates the Divine words that made Peter the Rock of the Church.

Ere long another procession appeared: Napoleon, surrounded by his band of marshals, by his chief civil officers and by the Bodies of the State, had entered the Cathedral in a vast concourse, and the dim religious light brought out an extraordinary scene of the magnificence of the past and of a present age of wonders. The Pontiff addressed himself to his sacred office, he poured the mystic oil on the kneeling sovereign, gave him the sceptre, and girt him with the sword, but Napoleon, with an expressive gesture, placed the crown on his head with his own hands, and wreathed the brows of his wife with a golden chaplet. The Emperor then ascended a high throne of state, the double processions being gathered round it, the apostolic blessing was pronounced, and as choir and organ pealed forth the hymn which had hailed Charlemagne Lord of the West, shouting crowds outside gave a joyous response, and the acclaim echoed far and wide through Paris. The satirist may gibe at all that may have been incongruous or out of date in the pageant, but history notes its true significance—how the Revolution, changed by a man of genius, had made a great military monarchy of France, and had arrayed itself in the most august forms of royal and feudal state in the past. The ideas of 1789 had given place for a brief moment to the ideas of the Franks of the

West, in the city which had made an idol of Voltaire, and had torn the dead bodies of its kings from the grave in the fool fury of 1793.

Ere long fresh stretches of power had begun to increase the alarm of the troubled Continent. Soon after the declaration of war with England, a French army had overrun Hanover; and this had become a standing menace to Prussia, already turning towards the Great Power of the North. French troops had taken possession of southern parts of Naples, on the plea that the Queen was an ally of England, and in answer to the retention of Malta; and divisions were placed on the Pyrenean frontier to keep Spain true to the French alliance. Soon after the coronation in Paris, Napoleon resolved that the Italian Republic should be transformed like its original in France; in a spectacle of great pomp in the Cathedral of Milan he was crowned with the Iron Crown of the Lombard kings; and, after uttering the ancient words of challenge, "Beware who touches this gift of God," he assumed the title of King of the whole of Italy. The Ligurian Republic was then swallowed up, with Genoa the Proud, made a part of France; and the little territory of Lucca became an Imperial fief, and was bestowed on the eldest of Napoleon's sisters, the first instance of many acts of the kind.

The rankling indignation caused by the death of the Duc d'Enghien in every court of Europe now took the form of distinct hostility; Austria, still casting her eyes on Italy, made secret preparations to renew the war; Russia moved troops by degrees towards the Niemen; and Prussia, fearing France,

was yet willing to strike. An incident in England had greatly strengthened the tendency of old Europe to take up arms once more. Pitt, replacing Addington and his weak ministry, had been called by the nation to power; and the son of Chatham, and the great treasurer of the two Leagues of 1793 and 1799, naturally turned to the Continent to seek assistance for his country against her implacable foe, though he had never ceased to regret the war. A proposal by the young and inexperienced Czar to make a general settlement of the affairs of Europe was changed, by the veteran British statesman, into a project of a Coalition against France; and Austria and Russia, Prussia holding back, undertook, in certain events, to bring into the field a force, with allies, of half a million of men. Pitt, as usual, was ready to give subsidies; and though the Continent seemed quiescent, the Coalition against France and her power, always hated and feared since 1789, had been almost matured in the summer of 1805.

These preparations had not escaped Napoleon; but he still hoped to accomplish the descent, and to "cut the knot of coalitions in London." It is doubtful if he ever had the intention of crossing the Channel with the flotilla alone, but he had long resolved to cover the passage by bringing a great fleet into the narrow seas, superior to any that England could oppose to it on the spot. His genius, his energy, his profound craft, were tasked to the utmost to effect his purpose; and indeed the difficulties in his way were such, that he thought for a moment of giving up the enterprise and of sending an expedi-

tion to invade India, an object of which he never lost sight. He had soon returned, however, to the project of the descent; and the plans he formed to master the Channel for a time, in the face of an enemy infinitely stronger at sea, were wonderful, and must be briefly noticed. His first design was that the Toulon fleet, eluding the blockading force of Nelson, who could not always keep the port closed, should traverse the Mediterranean, join the Rochefort squadron, and reach Boulogne with sixteen sail of the line, an armament much greater than the English Channel fleet; and this has been deemed most formidable by experienced seamen. The death, however, of the Admiral at Toulon, La Touche—an able man, who had beaten off an attack directed by Nelson, in 1801, on an assemblage of small armed craft at Boulogne—prevented the attempt being made; and Napoleon had recourse to a second project. According to this plan the Brest fleet, from eighteen to twenty sail-of-the-line, was to break the blockade, and after a descent on Ireland to press into the Channel at once, secondary attacks being at the same time made on the English settlements in the West Indies; but this arrangement proved also fruitless.

The third and last scheme was formed in the winter of 1804–5, and it was the boldest, the grandest, and perhaps the most promising. By this time England and Spain were engaged in war; Napoleon disposed of the naval resources of Spain; and he was master of fleets which in numbers at least were scarcely inferior to those of England. His plan now

was that Villeneuve, La Touche's successor, should escape from Toulon, attain the Straits, and rally a Spanish squadron at Cadiz; and the allied fleet was to make for the West Indies, in order to direct attention in England on an attack threatening her West Indian colonies. In the meantime the Brest fleet, in the hands of Ganteaume, was to evade the blockading fleet of Cornwallis, to join a French and Spanish squadron at Ferrol, and to hurry off to the West Indies; and then Villeneuve and Ganteaume, combining their forces, were to cross the Atlantic and enter the Channel. An armada of from forty-five to fifty sail-of-the-line would thus be brought together to shield the flotilla, and the English Channel fleet could not prevent the descent. In design at least this project was a strategic conception of the highest order; and the idea of masking the invasion by sending fleets across the ocean to the West Indies was worthy of Napoleon's genius of stratagem.

By the last days of March, 1805, Villeneuve and his fleet had got out of Toulon. He had soon joined the Spanish squadron at Cadiz; and he was at Martinique on the 13th of May with a combined fleet of eighteen large war ships. The passage had been slow, though without accidents; the French ships, hastily and ill-constructed, and the Spanish ships, ill-equipped and ill-manned, had proved for the most part, bad sailers, and Villeneuve, a skilful seaman, but a timid chief, still full of the dreaded memories of the Nile, feared the apparition of Nelson on his path. That great warrior, however, who had always had an eye for a French descent on

Egypt, had turned far eastward in pursuit of Villeneuve, and when he had learned that his foe was upon the Atlantic, he was long detained by contrary winds. Nelson had not left Europe until the second week of May, but he still hoped that he would reach and defeat Villeneuve, though he had not more than ten sail-of-the-line, and the French were more than three thousand miles distant. Meantime, Napoleon's projects had received a first check, if Villeneuve's movements had been as yet successful. Owing in some measure, to long protracted calms, but mainly to the stringency of the blockade, Ganteaume had not been able to stir from Brest; the Emperor, therefore, had had to change his plan, and he despatched two ships to inform Villeneuve that he was to leave the West Indies, if his colleague had not joined him by a given day, to rally the allied fleet at Ferrol, and then to sail for Brest, to unite with Ganteaume, and to appear in irresistible force in the Channel. Villeneuve was far from Martinique by the first days of June, eager, in any event, to avoid Nelson, and trembling at the responsibility imposed on him; but his bad ships again retarded his course, and July was advanced before the combined fleet had even approached the seas of Europe.

Nelson, meantime, had missed his expected quarry; he had been led by a false report to steer for Trinidad, and he only reached Antigua to find Villeneuve gone, without any indication of his enemy's movements. He set off in hot chase to recross the Atlantic; but Nelson had not fathomed Napoleon's designs, and he made for Cadiz, prob-

ably in the belief that his adversary was endeavouring to return to Toulon. Most fortunately he took a precaution which saved England, perhaps, from invasion; he despatched a light vessel to inform the Admirality that Villeneuve was on his way to Europe, and the Admiralty, when made aware of this, had just time to detach a squadron from the blockades of Rochefort and Brest, and to give it to Sir Robert Calder with orders to stop and attack Villeneuve. The French Admiral, whose movements had been as slow as ever, encountered Calder on the 22d of July, at some distance from Cape Finistère; he had twenty sail-of-the-line to fifteen, and though the battle was indecisive, he lost two ships. He made good, however, his way to Vigo, leaving three of his worst ships at that place, and in a few days he was in the roads of Ferrol, where he found a large Spanish and French squadron.

Villeneuve had now fulfilled a large part of his task; he had reached Ferrol almost intact; he had rallied the fleet he was to join at that place, and he was in command of twenty-nine war ships, which might be augmented to thirty-four by the Rochefort squadron, at sea, and near. But Ganteaume remained imprisoned at Brest, he had been unable to fulfil his mission, and the inferiority of the French and Spanish fleets had been proved in every conceivable way. An obstacle, too, of the most formidable kind, lay in the path of the French Admiral. Nelson, after touching at Gibraltar, had set sail for England; but he had left the greatest part of his

fleet at Brest; Calder had for a moment joined Cornwallis; the three British squadrons, if less numerous than those of Villeneuve and Ganteaume united, were far stronger than that of Villeneuve alone, and the French chief believed that he would be overpowered off Brest, before his colleague could come into line with him.

Yet fortune, at this crisis, gave Villeneuve a chance which a great leader might have turned to account. Cornwallis, soon after this time, detached Calder to observe Ferrol with seventeen ships, keeping only eighteen or twenty at Brest, and this strategic error made it possible that Villeneuve might defeat or elude Calder, might find Cornwallis at Brest too weak to resist him, and might rally Ganteaume and sail into the channel. Villeneuve, however, was not aware of the facts; he saw Nelson, Calder, and Cornwallis combined off Brest and waiting to destroy their prey; he had not yet heard of the Rochefort squadron, and he missed an occasion, his best and his last. Overwhelmed with care, and yet afraid to cross the will of an imperious master, who could not, or would not, perceive the weakness of the allied fleets compared to their foes, Villeneuve put out from Ferrol on the 13th of August, and sent a messenger to Napoleon that he was on his way to Brest. The winds, however, were adverse, and he lost spars and masts; he received the news that an English fleet was at hand; and he suddenly changed his course and made sail for Cadiz, his alarm being so great that he did not recall an order to the Rochefort squadron to advance north-

ward. The project of the junction of Villeneuve and Ganteaume, and of an Armada in the Channel, was thus completely frustrated.

Napoleon, meanwhile, had hastened from Italy—he had purposely delayed until the last moment—to direct his great and audacious enterprise. He had reviewed a mass of one hundred thousand infantry, assembled around the camp of Boulogne; and he wrote exultingly to his minister Decrès, who shared the secret with Ganteaume and Villeneuve, "that England did not know what was hanging on her ears." Every preparation had been made by the first days of August; the fleets at Brest and the Texel had their troops on board; the *impedimenta* of the army were in the transports; men, horses, and guns had their regular places in the different squadrons of the flotilla; and forty-eight hours of fine weather would suffice, it was believed, to effect the descent and to land one hundred and sixty thousand men on the shores of England. Napoleon's letters at this moment overflow with passion and hope raised to the most extreme pitch; when he heard that Villeneuve had put into Ferrol he wrote, "set off, and England is at our feet"; and he addressed Ganteaume in these emphatic words: "Appear in the Channel with your whole forces, and we shall have avenged six centuries of shame and wrong."

His confidence was at its height in the last week of August; and he strained his eyes from the cliffs of Boulogne to see the horizon whiten with the sails which would bring him, he thought, universal empire. Time however passed, and hope began to decline;

an ambiguous message despatched by Villeneuve threw doubt on the Admiral's real purpose; and Napoleon heard at last, with anguish and wrath, that Villeneuve had taken refuge in Cadiz. Meantime the Continent had been fast arming: a Russian force had approached Galicia; the Austrians were near the Adige and the Inn; and invasion threatened France and her allies. Napoleon's purpose was quickly formed, with the energy and determination of a great captain. The project of the descent had failed, and all that remained was to assail England through the Coalition, of which she was a chief author. Orders were sent to the army to break up from its camps and to advance rapidly across France and Germany; and in a few days the great warlike arrays were marching from the Channel and the Hanoverian plains to the Rhine and the Main, and thence to the Danube.

Napoleon's project for invading England certainly offered many chances of success. Except the skilful and sagacious Collingwood—and he guessed only part of the truth—no English seaman saw through the design; and the Emperor had the immense advantage of an attack concealed by profound stratagem. Had a tempest driven Cornwallis from Brest, Ganteaume probably would have reached the West Indies, and, with Villeneuve, might have led into the Channel an armament of irresistible force. Had not Nelson warned the Admiralty in time, nay, had Villeneuve's ships been better sailers, Calder could not have checked the allied fleet, and Villeneuve might have rallied Ganteaume and entered the nar-

row seas in overwhelming strength. Even at the last moment, had Villeneuve made boldly and skilfully from Ferrol for Brest, he might have found Cornwallis and Calder far apart; and in that event he might have been joined by Ganteaume, and both might have commanded the Channel.

Yet the adverse chances must, too, be considered, and, on the whole, they perhaps preponderate. Cornwallis succeeded in keeping Ganteaume at Brest, and the formidable plan of assembling a great fleet in the West Indies to attain the Channel was frustrated by superior British seamanship. Villeneuve's fleet was so sluggish in its movements that time was given to Calder to stop him, and the whole enterprise became thenceforward imperilled. Even had Villeneuve had the good fortune of finding Calder and Cornwallis divided, he could hardly have destroyed the fleet of Cornwallis, the quality of the allied war ships was so bad; and in that case, even if he had joined Ganteaume, and both had made their way into the Channel, Calder, Cornwallis, and the English Channel squadron would have made the passage of the flotilla doubtful in the extreme. An experienced and impartial French seaman has written that, in almost any event, the descent would have met many obstacles, and he hints that a great fight between Torbay and Dover might possibly have forestalled Trafalgar. Still, when all has been weighed, Napoleon's design, as regards the mere landing on the shores of England, was not far from being accomplished; and it is a striking instance how genius in war, but with imperfect means, and not in its own

element, may be baffled by professional skill, possessing more trustworthy and better resources. Had the descent been effected, the French army would, we have said, have encountered, most probably, a sterner resistance than Napoleon imagined; and, cut off from all communication with France by the concentration of fleets superior at last, he might have been imprisoned within his own conquest. It deserves peculiar notice that he did not expect to subdue England by mere force of arms; his intention was to overthrow the government and to set up a Democratic Republic; but this project would have certainly failed. The spirit of Englishmen would have united the whole nation against the invaders; and this is not the least striking example of Napoleon's rooted contempt of patriotism, and of the enormous force of popular feeling.

Historically, the most important event in this phase of Napoleon's fortunes was the failure of the invasion of England. Trafalgar was but the closing scene of a series of operations which proved that France could not contend on the seas with her foe; and the energies of her ruler were from this time directed to enterprises which naturally led to an attempt to subjugate the whole Continent, in efforts to effect the ruin of England. Universal conquest, already his dream of ambition, became in Napoleon's eyes a great scheme of policy, which aimed at destroying the trade of England and at striking down her allies in Europe; and the discomfiture of Villeneuve was soon followed by Austerlitz, Jena, Friedland and Tilsit. The tragic fate of the Duc d'Enghien

was an incident also of the gravest moment. This caused the movement that formed the Empire, and gave new incentives to Napoleon's passion for domination and despotic power; and it ultimately tended to create that League of Europe, which, baffled as it was over and over again, overthrew at last the proud Lord of the Continent. "King, Cawdor, Glamis,"—the author of this deed "now had it all," in the poet's language; but if Napoleon was not a mere assassin, he certainly "had played foully for it," and Fate was to "palter with him in a double sense," like its weird ministers that played with Macbeth; was to tell him that "none of woman born could hurt him," was to beckon him along a path of conquest and to send him over the abyss in despair.

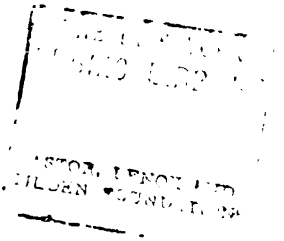
CHAPTER VII.

March of Napoleon into Germany—Military projects of the Coalition—Advance of the French to the Danube—Capitulation of Ulm—Battle of Trafalgar—March of Napoleon on Vienna—Secondary operations in Italy and in the Tyrol—Napoleon advances into Moravia—Difficulty and dangers of his position—Prussia secretly joins the Allies—Battle of Austerlitz and complete victory of the French—Peace of Presburg—The Confederation of the Rhine—Fall of the German Empire—Reflections.

IN the first days of September, 1805, Napoleon's great army was in full march across France and Germany, to attain the Danube. The soldiery, fired with enthusiastic ardour, and trained to exertion by the hard life of the camp, advanced with a celerity never before witnessed, and their movements were screened by the craft and resource of the greatest master of stratagem in modern war, and by the stern precautions of a despotic government, which silenced the noisy babble of the press. The Emperor's object was to take advantage of the bad operations of the Coalition, which, though able

NAPOLEON.

FROM A PEN-AND-INK SKETCH BY GROS.



to place in the field a force largely superior to his own, had distributed it wrongly upon the theatre, and had exposed itself to his strokes at the decisive points.

The Allies, influenced partly by reasons of state, and disregarding true military views, had projected four separate and ill-combined attacks; the first, on Hanover and Holland by a Russian and British force; the second, on Lower Italy by a similar body; the third, by a great Austrian army on Upper Italy; and the fourth, by a United Austrian and Russian army, moving across Southern Germany to the Rhine. But the first and second attacks were mere diversions, eccentric, feeble, and certain to fail, if success were achieved on the main scene of events; and, as to the third and fourth, the Coalition had made, and even aggravated, the mistakes of Austria, in the memorable contest of 1800. Austria, always eager to reconquer Italy, had massed about one hundred thousand men on the Adige, and in the hill land of the Tyrol, under the command of the Archdukes Charles and John, with directions to overrun the peninsula, and, if possible, to reach the frontier of Provence. As had happened, therefore, in the case of Melas, too large a force had been placed on secondary points, while too small a force, as in the case of Kray, had been collected on the principal point, the valley of the Danube approaching the Rhine, and that even with more evident error. By this time, the Austrian Mack had drawn close to the Inn, in order to compel Bavaria to join the Allies, and was even making his way to the Iller, but his

army was far distant from that of the Russian chief, Kutusoff, and still further from that of Buxhöwden, the one in Galicia, the other in Poland, the last observing the conduct of Prussia, known to be with the invaders at heart; and Mack's force was not more than eighty-five thousand strong, thrown forward toward the Swabian plains and the Danube. The Allies, however, had not perceived their mistakes, or, if they had, thought they had ample time for Kutusoff and Buxhöwden, with perhaps one hundred and forty thousand men, to come into line and to support Mack.

Napoleon had seized this position of affairs, with the comprehensive knowledge of the theatre of war, and the skill of arranging armies upon it, in which he has no equals among modern captains. He opposed Masséna to the Archdukes, with a much weaker force, confident that his great lieutenant could hold them in check. He neglected the attacks from the North Sea, and the South; but he resolved to strike down Mack, in overwhelming strength, should he advance without his Russian supports. A word must be said on the magnificent arrays, rightly given the name of the Grand Army, assembled at this time under the Emperor's eagles—the signs in which he was long to conquer—and forming the finest army he ever commanded. About one hundred and sixty thousand men were actually on the march; but they were to be joined by a Bavarian contingent, which had escaped to the Main, from the grasp of Austria, and by a few other German allies; and the Grand Army's full strength was nearly two

hundred thousand men, with perhaps two hundred thousand more in second line, made up of inferior troops, and levies of conscripts. The Grand Army was composed of seven *corps d'armée*, each an independent army in itself, and in the hands of experienced chiefs, the marshals and generals of the new age, too prone, indeed, slavishly to obey Napoleon, and without sufficient freedom of thought and action, but veteran and well tried soldiers; and it was nearly all formed of Frenchmen in the flower of life, but with a valuable admixture of old and proved troops. Apart from this noble force was the Imperial Guard—the Tenth Legion of the modern Cæsar—and like the Tenth Legion, matchless in the field; and the Emperor besides held in his own hands great reserves of guns and thousands of horsemen, his "Club of Hercules," to deal decisive strokes. The Grand Army, probably, though less in mere numbers, was a more safe and perfect instrument of war, than the young conscript armies of the present day, never yet tried by the rude test of misfortune; and yet it had real and evident defects. It was crowded with rude and ill-informed officers, the remains of the huge levies of 1793–94; the arrangements of the staff were far from good; and it had never lost the habits of the revolutionary hordes, let loose over Europe to slay and to plunder.

The great mass of the Grand Army had reached the Main and Rhine by the last week of September. The left wing, joined by the Bavarian forces, and commanded by Bernadotte and Marmont, had marched from Hanover and Holland, and was around Wurtz-

burg; the centre, the corps of Soult, and Davoust, moved from the Channel, was at Spire and Mannheim, and the right wing, formed of the corps of Ney and Lannes, with the Imperial Guard, and the horse of Murat, filled the region between Carlsruhe and Strasburg, the extreme right under Augereau, which had advanced from Brittany, being still behind but drawing towards Huningen. By this time Mack was upon the Iller, holding the fortress of Ulm on the upper Danube, and extending his forces thence to Memmingen; his conviction being that the French would advance on the ordinary path of previous invasions, across the Upper Rhine, and through the Black Forest. Napoleon's object, however, was wholly different: the Grand Army was upon the arc between Wurtzburg, Mannheim, and Strasburg; and his purpose was to advance to the Danube, to close on the flank and rear of Mack, as he had closed on the flank and rear of Melas, and to effect the destruction of the Austrian army.

By the first days of October the great French masses, their movements combined with perfect skill, were in full march from the Rhine to the Main, across Würtemberg and the Franconian plains; and cavalry filled the approaches to the Black Forest, in order to deceive and perplex Mack, as Melas had been deceived five years before, by the apparition of a hostile force at Mont Cenis, while the First Consul was passing the St. Bernard, and descending upon the Po, and the plains of Piedmont. The Danube ere long was reached and crossed, at Donauwörth, Ingolstadt, and other points; and Napoleon already

stood on the rear of his enemy, interposing between him and Vienna, and cut him off from the Russians, even now distant. The net was quickly drawn round the ill-fated Mack; some mistakes were made in gathering in the toils, mainly owing to disputes between Ney and Murat; but by the third week of October, the Grand Army had encompassed the Austrians on every side, and Napoleon held his quarry in his grasp. Mack, unlike Melas, had not had the heart to strike a desperate stroke, and to risk a battle; and he capitulated at Ulm on the 19th of October. Two divisions of his army had contrived to break out; but one was pursued and nearly destroyed by Murat, and the other was compelled by Augereau to lay down its arms, as it was on its way to the hills of the Tyrol. An army of eighty-five thousand men had thus, so to speak, been well-nigh effaced; and not twenty thousand had effected their escape.

France, meanwhile, had met a crushing disaster on the element which England had made her own. We have seen how Villeneuve had put into Cadiz, afraid to face the hostile fleets off Brest, and how this had baffled the project of the descent. Napoleon was indignant with his ill-fated admiral; but he ordered him quickly to set sail, to enter the Mediterranean, and to land a detachment to support the French army in the south of Italy; and soon afterwards he resolved to supersede Villeneuve, "a creature," he exclaimed, "who thinks only of his skin." Villeneuve, meantime, had been making exertions, unfortunately with very little results, to improve the French and

Spanish squadrons in Cadiz; but, at a hint of disgrace the susceptible Frenchman made up his mind, at any risk, to fight. By this time Nelson had left England, and was off Cadiz with a powerful fleet; and he actually weakened his force by several warships in order to lure his adversary out.

On the 20th of October, 1805, the allied fleet was in the open sea; it had been declared at a council of war, that a lost battle was almost certain, so bad was the condition of many of the crews; but Villeneuve was bent on challenging Fate; and almost courted defeat, in his despair. Nelson's plan of attack had been already formed; he had resolved to bear down, in double column, directly upon the long line of his foes; and if these tactics would have been reckless, had Villeneuve's fleet been nearly as good as his own, they were an inspiration of genius, as affairs stood, for they assured speedy and complete success. On the morning of the 21st, the allied fleet, thirty-three war ships, and a number of frigates, was off Cape Trafalgar, making for the Straits; but Villeneuve, at the first sight of Nelson, turned the heads of his ships towards Cadiz, in order to secure a way for retreat; and this was a plain confession of weakness. Nelson advanced slowly against his doomed enemy, with twenty-seven ships and their attendant frigates; the famous signal floated from his mast, "England expects every man to do his duty"; and, at about noon Collingwood pierced Villeneuve's centre, nearly destroying the *Santa Anna* with a single broadside. Ere long Nelson had broken Villeneuve's line, with the *Victory*, causing frightful de-

struction; and as other British ships came up by degrees they relieved the leading ships from the pressure of their foes, and completed the ruin already begun. At about one, Nelson met his death wound, struck by a shot from the tops of the *Redoutable;* but his spirit lived in the heroes he led; and he knew that he had gained a great triumph before he died. As the battle advanced, the French and Spanish ships, in many instances, fell out of line; and though a few made a gallant resistance, the result was, in a short time, assured. Pierced through and through, the shattered allied centre was soon a collection of captured wrecks; the van slowly withdrew from the scene of carnage; and the rear was almost destroyed by Collingwood's column, the *Royal Sovereign* and her consorts, overwhelming everything in their way. Only eleven ships out of thirty-three escaped; and the burning *Achille*, like the *Orient* at the Nile, added to the grandeur and horrors of an appalling scene. Villeneuve, who had fought most honourably in the *Bucentaure*, was compelled to strike his flag before the death of Nelson.

The van of the allies that had fled at Trafalgar, was soon afterwards captured by a British squadron. Though dearly bought by the death of Nelson, the victory may be compared to Lepanto; and it blotted France out as a great Power on the ocean. Napoleon, indeed, repeatedly sent out light cruisers to prey on British commerce; he built, especially at Antwerp, formidable fleets, in order "to fight a second Actium," at last; but he never tried afterwards to meet England at sea; and Trafalgar, we

have said, led him to seek for means of ruining England through Continental conquests. His success, at this moment, had been so wonderful, that what he called "the loss of a few ships at sea," seemed a trifling and passing rebuff of fortune. By the grand operation of directing the mass of his forces to the decisive spot, and overwhelming Mack at Ulm, on the upper Danube, after a march from the Channel to the Rhine and the Main, he had discomfited the whole plan of the Allies; and the failure of the attack on the main scene of the theatre had caused all the secondary attacks to fail. The weak diversions in the North, and in Southern Italy, projected by the Coalition, suddenly collapsed; and in Northern Italy it was scarcely more successful. While the Emperor had been pressing forward on Ulm, Masséna had held the Archduke Charles, on the Adige, in check, and had even beaten him at Caldiero, the scene of Napoleon's defeat in 1796; but on being informed of the destruction of Mack, the Austrian chief had been forced to retreat, and was ere long in the passes of the Julian Alps. The Archduke John was equally compelled to abandon the Tyrol; and the two princes were soon in full march, through the valley of the Drave, towards the Lower Danube, in order to strike a last blow for the House of Hapsburg.

Napoleon now carried out the magnificent design of Villars, formed in another age, a design that must have prevented Blenheim and Ramillies; and he marched directly, and with accustomed speed, down the valley of the Danube, on the Austrian capital. The Inn, the Traun, the Enns, and other

lesser feeders of the great river, were rapidly mastered; the Russians, under Kutusoff, who had approached the Inn, fell back after the capitulation of Ulm; and Napoleon throwing out detachments to protect his flanks, had entered Vienna on the 14th of November. One mistake, however, had been made in this wonderful march; Kutusoff had crossed the Danube, and had nearly destroyed a small body of the French on the northern bank, not far from the dungeon of Cœur de Lion.

The conqueror found Vienna abandoned; the House of Hapsburg and its chief had fled. Napoleon treated the city with studied clemency, showed himself in the streets with a few guards only, and disseminated proclamations artfully designed to set the Russians and Austrians at feud with each other. Extraordinary as his success had been, the position of the Emperor had, in a few days, become grave, nay, even alarming. In his march from Hanover to the Main, Bernadotte had passed through Anspach, an outlying tract of Prussia, and though it is perhaps questionable if this really was a violation of a neutral's rights, the Prussian Court felt, or pretended, anger. The Czar had dexterously played on this sentiment; he had paid assiduous homage to the King and his beautiful Queen at a visit to Berlin, and Prussia, secretly leaning towards the Allies for months, had agreed to send an army through the Bohemian passes and to descend in force on the rear of Napoleon while engaged with the Coalition in front. Meanwhile Kutusoff, a name to become famous, had made good his way to the north of the

Danube, though his army had suffered great losses; he had been joined by his colleague Buxhöwden, and a considerable part of their united forces, perhaps from seventy to eighty thousand men, were assembled in Moravia, not far from Olmütz. These had rallied the remains of the army of Mack, from twelve to fifteen thousand strong; and the two Archdukes, still at the head of from seventy to eighty thousand troops, were making for Moravia by forced marches across the Danube and through the plains of Hungary.

Dangers were gathering round the French at Vienna, and the condition of the Grand Army had, at the same time, become to a certain extent ominous. Large detachments were required to guard the long line of the communications with the Rhine; the system of living on conquered provinces inaugurated by the Revolution in 1792–93, and brought by Napoleon to the extreme of perfection—if organised rapine can so be called,—had not been able to suffice for the hosts in the field; crowds of deserters, marauders, and stragglers infested the tracts between the Rhine and the Danube, and Napoleon had not one hundred thousand men in hand—apart from the bodies that covered his flanks—to make head against his converging enemies. Always daring, however, he resolved to attack the Allies before they could receive aid from Prussia; and he marched from Vienna towards the close of November, having taken careful precautions to guard his rear. He disposed of from seventy thousand to eighty thousand men, and a skilful stratagem which had made

him master of the course of the Danube at Vienna had opened to him an easy way into the Moravian plains.

Napoleon had before long reached Brünn, but with part of his army only; two of his corps had been detached at a little distance. By this time the Allies were around Olmütz, the Archdukes were not many marches away, and a Prussian army was nearly ready to move. Had the Russians and Austrians fallen back from Olmütz and effected their junction with the Archdukes, they could, therefore, have opposed the French with a force more than twofold in numbers; and had Napoleon ventured to attack, the Prussians might have fallen on his rear, and possibly cut him off from the Rhine. The exercise of the simplest prudence would, in short, have made Napoleon's position exceedingly critical, if not desperate; and his advance on Brünn betrays the same overconfidence as the advance in 1800 into the plain of Marengo.

But the folly and presumption which reigned among the young nobles surrounding the Czar—Alexander was now at the head of his army—brought on the Coalition deserved punishment, and pedantry had its part in an immense disaster. The force of Napoleon appeared small, his natural line of retreat was exposed, and a theorist in the Austrian camp persuaded the Czar and the Austrian Emperor, who was at the head of his troops at Olmütz, to consent to a magnificent plan of assailing Napoleon by the well-known method of Frederick the Great, in the Seven Years' War, of turning his right wing, by

an attack made, in the oblique order, in great force, and of cutting him off from his base at Vienna, and driving him, routed, into Bohemia. This grand project on paper, which involved a march across the front of the hostile army within reach of the greatest of masters of war, was hailed with exultation in the allied councils, and the noisy acclaim of the companions of the Czar *—like that of Pompey's patricians before Pharsalia—silenced the faint protests of the experienced Kutusoff. The Allies were soon in full march from Olmütz, and preparations were made for the decisive movement in the night of the 1st December, 1805. Napoleon had watched the reckless false step being made by his foes with unfeigned delight; "that army is mine," he proudly exclaimed, and in an address to his troops he explained the bad manœuvre which was to place Austrians and Russians in their hands. He had already secured a second line of retreat, had called in his two detached corps, and was ready to overwhelm his imprudent enemies. But—consummate in stratagem now as always—he had assumed a timid, defensive attitude, for he sought to lure the Allies on to their fate.

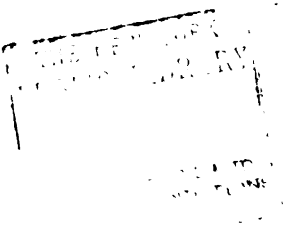
The sun of Austerlitz rose on the 2d, the light of victory often invoked by Napoleon. The sound of armed masses of men and of advancing batteries had

* "Hæc tum facta sunt in consilio, magnaque spe et lætitia omnium discessum est; ac jam animo victoriam præcipiebant, quod de re tanta et a tam perito imperatore nihil frusta confirmari videbatur."—Cæsar, *De Bello Civili*, iii., 87. The council of war at Olmütz, according to every account, was a repetition of this scene.

reached through the darkness the camps of the French, which, for a moment, had burst into flame, to do honour to their Imperial leader. The dawn of the winter's day revealed three large columns, succeeded by a fourth at no great distance, toiling through a tract of marshes and frozen lakes, to outflank Napoleon's right on the Goldbach, the allied centre, on the table-land of Prätzen, immediately before the French front, having been dangerously weakened by this great turning movement. The assailants were opposed by a small force only, under Davoust, one of the best of the marshals, which held the hamlets of Telnitz and Sokolnitz, points well fortified for a stern defence; and, entangled as they were in an intricate region, they made little progress against their well-directed foes. Ere long Napoleon, who, like a beast of prey, had reserved his strength until it was time to spring, launched Soult in force against the Russian and Austrian centre, enfeebled by the detachment against the French right and exposed to the whole weight of Napoleon's attacks; and Prätzen was stormed after a fierce struggle, in which Bernadotte gave the required aid to Soult. The allied centre was thus rent asunder. Lannes, meanwhile, had defeated the allied right; and though heroic efforts were made to restore the battle, and the cavalry of the French and Russian Imperial Guards joined in a contest, for a moment doubtful, the broken centre and right of the Allies was soon a mere chaos of dissolving fugitives, hurrying along the roads that extend to Austerlitz. Napoleon now turned with terrible energy and in overwhelming

strength against the four columns, that had assailed his right, but had begun to retreat. His victorious centre was aided by his right, now set free; the Russians and Austrians were struck with panic, a horrible scene of destruction followed, the flying troops were slain or captured in thousands, and multitudes perished, engulfed in the lakes, the French artillery shattering their icy surface. The rout was decisive, complete, and appalling; about eighty thousand of the Allies were engaged; they lost all their guns and nearly half their numbers, and the remains of their army were a worthless wreck. Napoleon had only sixty thousand men in the fight, and yet Austrians and Russians had nobly done their duty. The issue had been simply due to the fact, that mere force being even nearly equal, skill must prevail over ignorance in war, even though sustained by heroic courage.

The memorable campaign of 1805 is, perhaps, the grandest of Napoleon's exploits in war. It was not a series of prolonged efforts, in which genius at last prevailed, like the contest of 1796–97; it was not so dazzling as the campaign of Marengo; but it exhibited, in complete perfection, Napoleon's peculiar gifts as a warrior, the insight which sees the essential point of attack on a vast field of manœuvre, rapid, well combined, and scientific movements, and especially pre-eminent skill in stratagem, the results of a nature, in which imaginative power, calculation, energy, craft, and daring were qualities of surpassing force, and it proved the immense superiority of the Grand Army, as it had been fashioned by a master's



hand, over all armies hitherto seen in Europe. The methods of Napoleon in 1805 were, we have seen, nearly the same as those of 1800; he isolated and hemmed in Mack, as he had isolated and surrounded Melas, but if the march from the Channel to Ulm was less brilliant than that across the Alps, it was perhaps more grand and was better prepared, though the great superiority of the French in numbers makes their ultimate triumph less striking and wonderful. It must, however, be borne in mind that if Napoleon knew how to collect forces that defied resistance on the decisive point, he was weaker than the Coalition on the whole theatre, and this is one of the most signal instances of skill in war. Nevertheless, an error was, perhaps, made amidst these noble displays of the military art, which might have led to untoward results; the advance into Moravia was hazardous in the extreme, the Allies ought to have made it disastrous; and we see here again one of Napoleon's faults, excessive daring when on the flood-tide of fortune.

The campaign was magnificently closed by Austerlitz, the most perfect of battles on land, as the Nile was the most perfect on sea. It is an inadequate account of this mighty conflict to say that it proves how the system of Frederick encountered that of Napoleon, and was exploded by it; this is the truth, but far from the whole truth; the attack in oblique order * was, in no case, likely to succeed

* The attack in oblique order was Frederick the Great's favourite method of attack. It is fully explained in Hamley's *Operations of War*, p. 404, 5th ed., 1889.

against the flexible French movements, but at Austerlitz it was a flank march across the front of a great captain, that dangerously laid bare a weakened centre, and utter defeat was the natural result. The battle, however, was something wholly different from a scene of rival evolutions in the field; it was a triumph of genius in war knowing how to turn every advantage on the ground into account and to seize the occasion at the right moment, over pedantry and most unwise presumption. It illustrates, in the very highest degree, what Napoleon has called the "divine side of war," that which belongs to intellect and moral power, not the terrestrial side, the routine of tactics.

The Czar and his nobles were only too glad to accept an armistice after the rout of Austerlitz; and the Russians had soon disappeared into the steppes of the North. The Austrian Emperor, abandoned by his ally, had no choice but to sue for peace from the conqueror; and negotiations had soon begun. The Continent lay at the feet of Napoleon; and an opportunity for moderation, and for a wise policy of the most auspicious kind, was presented by fortune. The state of France was such as to command prudence; the blockade of her ports had injured her trade; the Conscription was slowly wasting her industry; and a pressure on her finances, already severe, had been aggravated by efforts made by the Treasury,* to sustain the credit of a knot of speculators who had undertaken to

* Gaudin, still at the head of the finances, was in no way responsible for these measures.

AUSTERLITZ.

REPRODUCED FROM THE PAINTING BY GÉRARD IN THE GALLERY AT VERSAILLES.

execute contracts for the State. The enthusiasm which had upheld the First Consul was, in fact, lessening towards the Emperor; and Napoleon had not been greeted with general acclaim, as he had passed through Paris, on his way to the Danube. At this conjuncture Talleyrand gave his master sound and judicious advice; he urged Napoleon to spare Austria, to bind her to France by the tie of gratitude, and to make her a bulwark against the power of Russia, already menacing the civilisation of the West; he pressed him, too, not to trust Prussia, whose double dealing had long been manifest; and though this policy had something in common with that of France before the Seven Years' War, it might have secured repose to Europe.

Napoleon, however, in the intoxication of success, insisted on making peace on his own terms; he rejected the counsel of the sagacious minister; and by the Treaty of Presburg, made at the close of the year, Austria was deprived of her late acquisition of Venice, including the eastern Adriatic provinces, of the Tyrol, and of much that she possessed in Swabia, for centuries a dominion of the House of Hapsburg, and was reduced to a power of the second order. Meanwhile Napoleon had given his commands that the Bourbons at Naples must cease to reign; the French divisions, which, as we have seen, had entered the kingdom some months before, seized the capital and overran the country, on a charge that the Queen had broken faith, and Sicily was marked out for approaching conquest. Prussia had to be dealt with, in the next instance, and Napoleon

treated her with a cynical contempt, which, if the just meed of her weak perfidy, was, nevertheless, certain to make her an enemy. After Austerlitz she had licked the Emperor's hand; had hastily put an end to her armaments; and had sent an envoy to the camp of the victor to make earnest professions of sincere friendship. Napoleon was not in the least deceived; but Prussia, he thought, could be bought cheap; and he flung her Hanover as a bait, as the stipulated price of a close and lasting alliance with France, and in order to set her at odds with England, to whose king Hanover really belonged. It was the statecraft of Campo Formio less skilfully displayed.

These arrangements necessarily made Austria a deadly foe of France and her ruler; turned Prussia into a discontented vassal, disgraced by a shameful and dangerous bribe, and gave England a point of vantage in Sicily, the last refuge of the fallen Court of Naples. Yet this division of conquest was but a part of the scheme of ambition now formed by Napoleon. The time had come, he believed, to realise the project of a vast Empire of the West, with subject kings and dependent princes, which had flitted before his mind of late; and he addressed himself to carry out his purpose. He added the Venetian provinces to his kingdom of Italy, and made his stepson, Eugene Beauharnais, Viceroy; he bestowed the crown of Naples on his brother Joseph, and suddenly changed the Batavian Republic into a monarchy for his brother Louis. In Italy, moreover, which he had treated almost from the first, as wax in his hands, he

created a series of great Imperial fiefs, like that of Lucca, before referred to; and these appanages of conquest were to become the domains of the chief feudatories of the Empire of France. One of these, Pontecorvo, was given to Bernadotte, a near kinsman of the new King of Naples; another, Beneventum, was given to Talleyrand, a reward for services not enough valued; and the others were reserved for the chief companions of arms, whom the modern Charlemagne had resolved to make the heads of a *noblesse* of the sword, mingled with the *noblesse* of the Bourbon monarchy that had survived the Revolution and its shocks. Princely alliances, too, were to support the dynasty established upon the throne of the West; a princess of Bavaria married Eugene Beauharnais; a prince of the House of Baden married a cousin of Eugene; and a princess of Würtemberg was destined to Jerôme Bonaparte, as soon as he could be released from an inconvenient marriage.

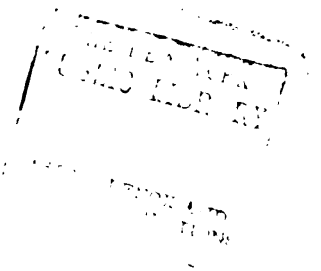
Another event at this conjuncture largely extended a domination ever on the increase. In order still further to weaken Austria, Napoleon had enlarged Bavaria and Würtemberg, and had made the Electors, his allies, kings; he had also reduced the privileges of the great sovereign nobles, for centuries loyal to the House of Hapsburg; and this had led to such confusion and discord that Germany had turned again to Napoleon, as she had turned after the Peace of Lunéville. Through the Emperor's intervention, the States between the Lahn, the Rhine, and the Upper Danube, were formed into a League dependent on France, and given the name of the Confedera-

tion of the Rhine; their princes were merely crowned vassals bound to send contingents to the French armies; and their Protector, Napoleon, was simply their master. As evidence of their complete subjection, Murat received the Principality of Berg; and the Grand Army, which had been on its way home, was spread over a large part of Southern Germany. The establishment of the new league caused a revolution that greatly moved Europe; the Emperor of Austria renounced the title of Emperor of Germany long borne by his House; and the Holy Roman Empire disappeared. An august name, which had linked the world of the Cæsars with the Middle Ages and the nineteenth century, had been replaced by a creation of the sword, moulded out of Revolution, by an adventurer, who had left a nook in Corsica, to subdue France and the Continent.

Trafalgar and Austerlitz—a tremendous contrast—had confirmed Napoleon's growing belief that if he could not overthrow England at sea he could deal her destructive blows on the Continent; and defeat and victory urged him into new wars and to a further extension of the domain of conquest. He had again stricken down a great Coalition, and had added to the military grandeur of France, but he had not increased the strength of his Empire. At home his position had gradually changed; he seemed no longer to be the wise Dictator defending the Revolution and all that belonged to it; august as were the forms in which he veiled his power, and ennobled by the memories of the past, he had become a despot ruling by force; and dynastic ambition

MEETING OF NAPOLEON AND THE EMPEROR FRANCIS II. AFTER THE BATTLE OF AUSTERLITZ.

FROM THE PAINTING BY GROS IN THE GALLERY AT VERSAILLES.



had been a leading motive in his latest arrangement of Continental Europe. A people proud of military renown, and of supremacy over every other state, might hail for a time an Empire of the West, encircled with subject thrones and powers, especially as long as the huge fabric was irradiated by the glare of repeated victories. But the Empire had no foundation in the traditions of France, and was not rooted in the national sentiment; and should the hour of misfortune come, Frenchmen would not rise to maintain the throne of a Joseph or a Louis Bonaparte, as they had risen to defend the natal soil against the embattled hosts of Europe.

Abroad the Empire had become a scheme of oppression leading to universal conquest. The respect for the ancient order and state of the Continent, which had distinguished Napoleon's earlier policy, had either disappeared, or was only seen in violent changes, not the less odious because concealed in the pomp of the past; and the boundaries of states were recklessly shifted, with no regard to aught but the wish of an autocrat. It may well be doubted if the arrangement of Continental Europe, at the Peace of Lunéville, could have endured the trials of time; but that which followed Austerlitz could not be lasting. Even subject Italy could not like the presence of foreign potentates seated in her midst, and sending her wealth across the Alps, as had been her lot when under the yoke of Austria. Russia was still in arms, though vanquished in the field; Austria and Prussia were made angry foes of France, and the tendency of the Powers, which had

despoiled Poland, to draw together after that deed of wrong, was another element to combine them against the Empire. As for Germany, the Confederation of the Rhine was a menace to her independence, and even existence; and the presence of French armies on the Main and the Danube showed that the supremacy of France had been replaced by tyranny. The dissolution, too, of the old German Empire, and the creation of new kingdoms ruled by Napoleon's satellites, broke up the barriers which had divided the nation; and French conquest and oppression directly encouraged a general movement towards German unity, in order to set the country free. The end, however, was still not at hand; and the Titan of war was for a space of time to heap Pelion on Ossa with defiant hands, until the avenging bolts of Olympus should fall.

CHAPTER VIII.

Death of Pitt—Prospects of peace between France and England—Negotiations broken off—Renewal of war on the Continent—Conduct of Prussia and of Napoleon—Excitement at Berlin—Advance of the Grand Army from the Main to the Saale—Battles of Jena and Auerstadt, and overthrow of the Prussian army and monarchy—Capitulation of fortresses—Napoleon inaugurates the Continental System—The Berlin Decree and the Orders in Council—The Grand Army marches into Poland—Policy of Napoleon to the Poles—Precautions taken by Napoleon to secure his army—Winter campaign on the Narew—Battle of Pultusk—Napoleon's system of war comparatively fails—March of the Russian army towards the Alle—Pursuit of Napoleon—Battle of Eylau—Napoleon at Osterode and Finkenstein—Extraordinary efforts made to strengthen and increase the Grand Army—Battle of Friedland—Complete victory of the French—Napoleon and the Czar on the Niemen—Peace of Tilsit—Reflections on Napoleon's policy.

A SUDDEN change in the Councils of England gave Europe a prospect of general peace in the spring and summer of 1806. The health of Pitt had been long in decline, and, though he was revived for a few weeks by Trafalgar, he expired, broken-hearted, after the rout of Austerlitz. He was succeeded by a Ministry of Tories and Whigs, but his great rival, Fox, was its real head ; and an accident

enabled Fox, who had denounced the contest with France since 1793–94, and had become intimate with the First Consul during a visit to Paris in 1802, to make overtures of a friendly kind to Napoleon. The negotiations were continued for months, and promised for a time a successful issue, but Napoleon would not forego his claim on Sicily, as part of his brother Joseph's kingdom of Naples, though he had failed to land a single man on the island; a brilliant victory won by a British force at Maida, in Calabria, stirred all hearts in England; and even Fox viewed with alarm and distrust the enormous extension of the power of France, caused by the newly-formed Confederation of the Rhine. Napoleon was frustrated in an attempt to make a separate peace with the Czar, and to detach Russia from the English alliance; and the death of Fox, who, in his last moments, condemned the ambition of the Imperial conqueror, made the war party in England supreme, and put an end to all hope of a pacific settlement.

On the Continent, however, the renewal of far-spread war was due to the angry and false relations which had been formed between Prussia and France. Napoleon, we have seen, had, after Austerlitz, given Hanover as a bribe to Prussia, who, for some months, had been plotting against him; and the bribe, under these conditions, was a mocking affront. But Prussia, in order to save appearances, refused to accept Hanover, except on her own terms; she tried to excuse herself with Russia and England, and she actually sent an envoy to the Czar, at this moment at war with France, to offer him secretly

help and alliance. In terror, however, of Napoleon's power, she ere long weakly shifted her course; and she ultimately consented to take Hanover, but now on Napoleon's conditions, and not on her own; these involving the closing of her ports to England, and war with a Power she could not resist at sea.* Meanwhile negotiations had been in progress between the plenipotentiaries of France and England; and it was perfectly understood that, in the event of peace, England was to obtain possession of Hanover again, though Napoleon had made it over to Prussia. That Power, already chafing at the conduct of France, and suffering cruelly from war with England, now believed that she had been made a dupe by Napoleon, and was about to be offered up as a scapegoat, in order to secure European peace; and her alarms were aroused almost to frenzy by the presence of the Grand Army in Germany, and by the creation of the Confederation of the Rhine, which made France a dangerous neighbour on the Elbe. The pent-up passion of months burst forth; the whole nation clamoured for war with France; the partisans of the French alliance, and even the French ambassador at Berlin, were covered with insults; the army, proud of the renown of Frederick, thought only of vengeance and of triumphs at hand; and Prussia recklessly challenged Napoleon to a single-handed and most unequal contest. The

* Prussia, at this juncture, was the object of the scorn and reproach of nearly all Europe. Fox denounced her conduct as "a compound of everything that is contemptible in servility, with everything that is odious in rapacity."

Queen, the fairest ornament of the Court, put herself at the head of the war party, and overbore the timid and hesitating King.

That Prussia had wrongs can hardly be denied; but her perfidy and weakness had brought them on herself, and if Napoleon had resolved to take Hanover from her, he intended to give her an ample equivalent. An impartial review of the facts proves that he had no wish for a war at this crisis, and he received the summons of Prussia to the field with regret.* The die, however, had been foolishly cast, and a Power, quite of the second order, was brought into collision with the great Empire of France. The conditions of the struggle, besides, were unfavourable, in every respect, to Prussia. She had boldly assumed a daring offensive, almost before the declaration of war; and her armies, moved from Magdeburg and Dresden, were spread, in the first week of October, on both banks of the Upper Saale, not far from the defiles of the Thuringian Forest, the chiefs exulting at the prospect of a march to the Rhine. But at this very moment, the Grand Army, which had gradually advanced from Southern Germany, was in positions on the Upper Main, approaching, from Franconia, the valley of the Saale; and it was thus already near the flanks of its foe, and threatening his communications with the Elbe. The leaders of the Prussians too, Hohenloe and Brunswick, were worn-out veterans of the Seven

* See a remarkable letter of Napoleon to the King of Prussia, written some weeks before hostilities broke out. *Correspondance*, tome xiii., 170. Detractors can only denounce it as insincere.

Years' War, divided in purpose, and devoid of skill; the French were in the hands of the first of captains. The Prussian army was ill-organised, slow in movement, and unaccustomed to war; the Grand Army had reached the extreme of perfection, and, reckoning even an unwilling Saxon contingent, the Prussians were very inferior to their foes in numbers,—perhaps one hundred and fifty thousand to one hundred and ninety thousand men, not to speak of great French reserves in second line.

In these circumstances, the issue of events could hardly be, even for a moment, doubtful. Napoleon advanced from the Upper Main, on the 8th of October, making from Bamberg and Baireuth for the Upper Saale, at Saalfield and Hof, in three great columns; and he had soon overwhelmed some weak detachments of Hohenloe's scattered and half surprised force. The Grand Army was now on the flank of its enemy, and this menacing attitude forced the Prussian chiefs to abandon all thoughts of an offensive movement, and to retreat as quickly as they could to the Elbe, Hohenloe crossing the Saale and drawing near Jena, and Brunswick falling still further back, and seeking to gain the line of the Unstrut. Napoleon would not believe, for a time, that the flight of his foes could be so precipitate, and he made preparations for a great battle, near Gera and Auma, between the Saale and the Elster. His arrangements were, however, changed with characteristic skill, when he had been made more fully aware of the facts. He despatched Davoust and Bernadotte to seize the passages of the Lower

Saale, at Naumburg and Dornburg, and to close on the line of the retreat of the Prussians; and he advanced on Jena to attack his enemy, with the corps of Lannes, Ney, Soult, and Augereau, the Guard, and the horsemen of Murat.

These movements formed the prelude to the great day of Jena, one of the most decisive of Napoleon's triumphs. The Emperor, having crossed the Saale, made himself master of the Landgrafenberg, a height overlooking Hohenloe's camps, after extraordinary and incessant efforts; and he had his foe in his grasp before a shot was fired. On the morning of the 14th of October, Napoleon issued from this point of vantage with part of his troops, and his advancing forces, gathering on either side, closed gradually on the doomed Prussian army, whose chief was not prepared for this daring attack. The Prussian soldiery fought with desperate courage, and, even in the hour of defeat and ruin, exhibited* the precision and skill in manœuvring which Frederick had made their special excellence; and the corps of Ney was for a time in danger. But Soult on the right, and Augereau on the left, turned Hohenloe's position on both flanks; the French centre advanced in overwhelming force, and the Prussians, utterly outnumbered, and hopelessly routed, were soon a multitude of disbanding fugitives.

* "The Prussians fought like tigers," wrote an English eyewitness. Napoleon was just to his enemy: "L'armée ennemie était nombreuse et montrait une belle cavalerie; ses manœuvres étaient executées avec précision et rapidité."—*Corr.*, tome xiii., 356.

A contest, meanwhile, of a very different kind had been raging at Auerstadt to the right. Davoust, we have seen, had been despatched to Naumburg, to intercept the retreat of the enemy; and when he had become aware that the army of Brunswick was endeavouring to make its way to the Unstrut, he advanced through the defile of Kosen, and urged Bernadotte, some miles to his left, to join him and to attack the Prussians. But Bernadotte had been ordered to go to Dornburg,* and either from the habit of slavish obedience, which was the worst fault of Napoleon's marshals, or more probably from jealous dislike of a colleague, he refused to send a single man to Davoust, and took no part in the operations of the day. Davoust was thus left with twenty-seven thousand men to confront Brunswick with seventy thousand, for Napoleon, at Jena, had opposed one hundred thousand to Hohenloe and sixty thousand; and the Marshal and his troops gained undying renown. The charges of the Prussian cavalry failed against the squares of the French footmen; the Prussian infantry made no impression on the flexible steady French lines; and after the fall of Brunswick, and most of his colleagues, the fatal resolve was formed to retreat, and to effect a junction with Hohenloe's army, believed, at the moment, to be safe at Jena. This false and unworthy course proved ruinous. The columns of Brunswick came in contact

* Napoleon seems to have given Bernadotte a discretion to join Davoust, and severely censures Bernadotte. *Corr.*, tome xiii., 393.

ere long with the routed host of Jena, the contagion of terror and dismay spread, and the two Prussian armies, inextricably confused, and presenting hideous scenes of despair and weakness, were driven in ignominious rout towards the Elbe. The Saxon plains were strewn with the dying and the dead, and whole regiments surrendered when the dreaded trumpets of the pursuing French horsemen were anywhere heard.

The operations that ended at Jena, decisive and brilliant as they were, are not to be classed with Napoleon's best exploits in war. The superiority of the French over the Prussian army in numbers and quality was so great that the ultimate result could be hardly uncertain; in this instance, the conditions of 1796, of 1800, and of 1805, were reversed, and the balance, caused by inferiority of force, was not redressed by commanding genius and skill. The plan, too, of marching from the Upper Main into the valley of the Saale, on the flank of the enemy, was an obvious, though the best possible, course, and it occurred to Jomini, at this time a young officer in the Imperial service. Napoleon, besides, made more than one mistake. He could not conceive that the army of Frederick would suddenly decamp and shun a battle; he lost time in preparing to fight, in positions, between Gera and Auma; and while he attacked Hohenloe in overwhelming strength, Davoust was left too weak to confront Brunswick, though probably this was mainly the fault of Bernadotte. Errors like these, however, are but spots on the sun; they are inevitable in the chances of war, and even the

greatest captains cannot avoid them, for they must often act on imperfect knowledge.

The next passage in the contest is, perhaps, the finest example in Napoleon's career, of one of his greatest military gifts—his power in striking down a defeated enemy; a gift which makes "his battle," in Napier's language, resemble "the wave that effaces the landscape." He had soon crushed the feeble reserve, the only intact part of the Prussian army, which opposed itself to his terrible strokes: and he allowed the Saxon contingent to disband, and separated it from the wrecks of the forces of Jena. He had, therefore, nothing to deal with now but the remains of Hohenloe's and Brunswick's troops; and his pursuit of these was most skilful, keen, and decisive. The Prussian commanders had got over the Elbe, followed by a scattered and confused multitude; and, fearing they would be intercepted by the victorious French, they endeavoured to reach and cross the Oder by a circuitous march, of great length, through the plains of Mecklenburg and Pomerania. Napoleon, however, had seized the chord of the arc along which his beaten enemies moved; and, turning to advantage the lesser distance, and hastening the advance of his exulting troops, he anticipated the Prussians, and cut off their retreat. Hohenloe laid down his arms with some sixteen thousand men, the mere fragments of his ruined army; Blücher, a rough veteran of the Seven Years' War, but destined to win an historical name, tried boldly to retrace his steps to the Elbe, and entered the neutral town of Lübeck, in the

hope of effecting his escape by sea; but he, too, was compelled to surrender, and not twenty thousand men of the routed forces of Jena and Auerstadt reached the Oder. Meanwhile terror and despair had paralysed the energies of Prussia, and of the stricken nation. Berlin had humbly thrown open her gates to the conqueror; great fortresses had yielded to Murat's hussars; Spandau, Stettin, Magdeburg, and other strong places fell after hardly a sign of resistance; and the military monarchy, reared by Frederick the Great, crashed down as if through the stroke of an earthquake.

We can hardly feel surprise that, after these triumphs, Napoleon believed that nothing could withstand his power.* He had felt sincere respect for the Prussian army, the traditions of Frederick were still so strong; but that army had been literally blotted out, and Prussia lay a fallen victim, at his feet. He had entered Berlin, a few days after Jena, had passed through the streets with the Imperial Guard, had, as at Vienna, caressed the middle classes, but had said hard things of the *noblesse* of the sword; and he was soon engrossed in the congenial tasks of calling up reserves from the Rhine, of levying contributions from vanquished provinces, and of ministering to the needs of his victorious forces. It is much to be regretted that so great a man, in the exultation of marvellous success, should have

* Napoleon wrote thus from Potsdam, 25th of October, 1806: "J'ai écrasé la monarchie Prussienne; j'écraserais les Russes s'ils arrivent; je ne crains pas davantage les Autrichiens."—*Corr.*, tome xiii., p. 410.

stooped to such acts as making booty of the orders and sword of Frederick the Great, and in slandering the ill-fated Queen of Prussia, a chief author of the war, but a defenceless woman.

Napoleon was now master of three-fourths of the Continent; and he turned his mind to a vast project, on which he had brooded for some time, for injuring the one Power which had baffled his arms, and which he had felt to be his most formidable foe. Trafalgar had made the descent impossible; but might not the lord of the greatest part of Europe be able to destroy the commerce of England, and to compel her at last to bow to his will? Since the beginning of the Revolutionary War, it had been the habit of the governments of France to seize and confiscate British merchandise, in countries occupied by French armies, and the ports of France and of her allies were closed to British trade. Napoleon now formed the gigantic design of excluding England, and all her dependencies, and all neutral nations who traded with her, from intercourse with European countries; and it must be admitted that the contempt shown by England for neutral rights at sea, gave some colour to this unjust policy. By two famous Decrees, one issued from Berlin, the other from Milan some months afterwards, Napoleon declared the British islands in a state of blockade, defending the measure, as a reprisal for the "paper blockades" of British fleets; and the consequences were immense and far-reaching. British subjects in France, or in the countries of her allies, were to be prisoners of war. British goods, or the

goods of British colonies, or even of neutrals trading with England, were pronounced liable to confiscation. All commerce with England, or with her colonies, was prohibited under severe penalties, and vessels that touched at the ports of Great Britain, or even of her colonies, were shut out from the harbours of France, and of her allies. Every land, in a word, under the sway of the Emperor was to reject commerce with England, and all that pertained to it; and Great Britain and her people, in the poet's words, were to be isolated from the rest of mankind, amidst the civilisation of the nineteenth century.

These measures are known as the Continental System; and England retaliated by declaring, in the scarcely less famous Orders in Council, that France and her allies were blockaded, and that neutrals were not to trade with them.* We shall see hereafter clearly the results of these monstrous violations of nature and law, but the subject may now be briefly glanced at. The Orders in Council were not, perhaps, very effective, and the Continental System did not destroy British commerce, as Napoleon expected, though it certainly did it no little injury. It is questionable, however, if the prohibition of a world-wide trade did not do more mischief to France and her vassals than to England, and it placed the marine of every weak State at the mercy of the dominant British fleets. Yet these were not the chief and most potent consequences. The attempt to deprive the Continent of British and colonial imports, that is of many necessaries and luxuries of

* "Except upon conditions imposed by herself."

life, provoked general indignation and distress; and it led to an inquisition of the most oppressive kind throughout the French Empire and its dependencies, in order to confiscate British merchandise. The most memorable result was, however, this: In the hope of closing the channels of trade to England, Napoleon was led from conquest to conquest; his eagerness to carry out the Continental System caused him to aim at universal dominion; and this was one of the main reasons that his armies were sent to perish in Spain and in Russia.

All this, nevertheless, was still in the future, and the conqueror as yet was upheld by Fortune. Russia had never ceased to be at war with France, but she had been unable to extend a hand to Prussia; and her armies had not approached the Vistula until weeks after the disaster of Jena. Napoleon, having taken every precaution to strengthen his forces and to protect his flanks, had sent forward part of the Grand Army into Poland, in the second week of November, and he was soon advancing with the remaining part in the hope of defeating his new enemy. He was now on the scene of the famous Partition; the Poles greeted the French as deliverers; they had shed their blood in the armies of France, and it had always been a tradition of French policy to defend, and, if possible, to restore Poland. But no proof exists that either on this occasion, or on another still more momentous, Napoleon really entertained the thought of making the Poles once more a nation. The difficulties of such a policy were immense; he could hardly, at this juncture,

make Austria a foe and throw her into the arms of Russia and Prussia, by trying to undo the work of the Three Powers, and a considerable party in the *noblesse* of Poland was disinclined to an alliance with France. In this, too, as in every passage of his career, he scorned and distrusted popular movements, and his conduct to the Poles was nearly of a piece with that of which he had given proof in Italy. He caressed their leaders and spoke fair words; he enrolled Poles among his troops in thousands; but he declared that Polish independence was not to be thought of until the whole nation had risen in arms, a condition which he knew was impossible. He looked to France and his Empire all through, and treated Poland simply as a card in his game.

Towards the close of December the Grand Army had established itself firmly on the Vistula, holding the river on both banks from Thorn to Warsaw. The Russian commanders fell back at its approach, and retreated into the region of morass and forest, formed by the Narew, the Ukra, and the Bug, communicating, on their extreme right, with the remains of the Prussian army, spread around Soldau. The Allies, however, were widely divided; Kamenski, a veteran of the day of Suvóroff, had no control over his younger lieutenants; one of these, Benningsen, was thrown forward into the angle between the Ukra and the Narew; the other, Buxhöwden, proved in 1805, was far in the rear, at Ostrolenka, and the Prussian Lestocq was at a great distance. These faulty dispositions were not lost on the great captain,

who, on the field before him, saw an opportunity to separate and defeat his enemies; and Napoleon resolved to advance from the Vistula, to beat the Russian chiefs in detail, and, isolating Lestocq, to force the Russian army into the barren and inhospitable wastes of Poland, where it could hardly escape disaster and ruin.

The Grand Army, far more powerful than its foes, —probably one hundred and forty thousand to one hundred and twenty thousand men, and flushed with the renown of many triumphs, was in full march in the last week of December; and the Emperor was so confident of decisive success that he wrote to Paris he hoped to bring the war at once to a close. Yet his brilliant design almost wholly failed, and he gained only imperfect success. His right wing, under Davoust and Lannes, crossed the Narew and the Ukra, and expelled Benningsen from the confluence of the two rivers; his centre, led by Augereau and Soult, crossed the Ukra and bore down on Buxhöwden, and far to his left Ney attacked Lestocq, and drove him from his positions at Soldau. But the Grand Army became almost paralysed and proved unequal to make the rapid movements, which, in Italy and Germany, had proved decisive. The troops were retarded for want of supplies; the cavalry could not discover the enemy behind a screen of far-spreading woodland; above all, the advancing columns, possessing no roads, and toiling through swamps, which formed a vast sea of mud, could not come up with their retiring foes. Napoleon's project was not carried out and his intended quarry

eluded his grasp. Lannes fought at Pultusk against superior numbers and narrowly escaped a serious defeat. Davoust, at Golymin, was really held in check; Soult and Augereau hardly accomplished anything, and though Ney certainly defeated Lestocq, he was not able to follow up his victory. The allied generals suffered great losses, but they effected their retreat behind the Narew, and Napoleon's operations proved abortive.

The movements of Napoleon in this brief contest were, as always, brilliant in the extreme, in design. They failed, nevertheless, to a very great extent, and the chief reason of the failure deserves attention. Napoleon's splendid and scientific genius was the main cause of his triumphs in war; the "divine side of the art," we use his words again, was illustrated in the highest perfection by him. But war, too, has a "terrestrial side," and material conditions, which contributed to victory from 1796 to 1805, were wanting in the campaign in Poland. The French generals of the Revolutionary War, because really they had no other choice, were the first to strike a decisive blow at one of the most conspicuous, yet most faulty parts of the military routine of the eighteenth century. Instead of depending on huge magazines, which necessarily delayed the march of armies, they flung their troops, like hordes, over the countries they entered, made them live on resources found on the spot, and scattered them over every road they met; and this practice, bad and dangerous as it was, gave rapidity and ease to their general movements. Napoleon found this system existing,

but he adapted it to the real uses of war, and brought it to a pitch of the highest perfection. It is a mistake to suppose that he did not employ magazines, arrange depots, and, in short, do everything to provide for the needs and safety of his troops; he was one of the most methodical, as well as the first of captains. But when he was actually in the field, he required his soldiers, as far as possible, to find out supplies for themselves, though he supplemented these by immense exactions; and he thoroughly perceived how the progress of husbandry and the great increase of communications and roads which had taken place since the Seven Years' War, would enable armies to move with far more celerity, than had been possible in the days of Frederick the Great, the ideal of most of the commanders of his youth. The general result was that the Napoleonic legions, unincumbered by the huge *impedimenta*, which kept back their over-burdened foes, and admirably directed on all the highways, available to them in a given region, had a quickness, a power, and an art of manœuvring which their adversaries could not possess or acquire, and their great chief, by these means, overcame soldiers accustomed only to the usages of the past. But if this system of war produced great results in fertile lands like the valley of the Po, the tracts round the Danube, and the plains of Germany, and where the roads were frequent and good, it could not succeed when these conditions either did not exist, or were reversed; and the operations in Poland largely failed, because the French soldiery could not find means of subsist-

ence in barren wastes, and because their movements, and especially those of the cavalry, were paralysed amidst trackless forests and marshes. It does honour to Wellington that he was the first commander to perceive the inherent defects of this system, and the lesson he taught in Portugal was to have great results.

The Grand Army, after this indecisive contest, was placed again along the line of the Vistula. But the great difficulty of obtaining supplies in barren and ill-cultivated tracts of country, caused it to be spread over an immense region, and the corps of Ney and Bernadotte, its left wing, was disseminated nearly to the East Prussian seaboard. This extreme dispersion gave the Russian commanders an opportunity which might have been made fortunate. The aged Kamenski had been superseded, and Benningsen, who had persuaded the Czar that he had really gained a victory at Pultusk, having been given the command of the Russian army, resolved to take a determined offensive. Moving on a great semicircle behind the lakes and forests, between Northern Poland and Eastern Prussia, and contriving to conceal his march from his enemy, he fell on the left of the Grand Army and endeavoured to overwhelm Bernadotte and Ney before supports could come to their aid. His attacks, however, were timid and partial, the marshals fell back towards the Vistula; and meanwhile Napoleon had broken up from his camps and made preparation for a decisive counterstroke. Marching rapidly in the last days of January—the winter of the North had congealed the plains and made military operations no longer dif-

ficult—he approached the heads of the Alle and the Passarge, his object being either to cut off the retreat of Benningsen, should he advance further, or to force him, defeated, across the Niemen. An intercepted despatch, however, made the Russian commander aware of his danger, and he instantly fell back towards the Alle and the Pregel, pursued by his indefatigable and now hopeful enemy. The Russian troops, in the retreat, displayed the stubborn constancy of the Muscovite race. They defended more than one position with success, and Benningsen at last, severely pressed, resolved to make a bold stand and to fight, and drew up his army behind the little town of Eylau.

The battle fought on the 8th of February, 1807, was one of the most frightful and well-contested of any age. The Russians were slightly superior in numbers, probably eighty thousand to seventy thousand men, and had largely the greater force of guns; but the Grand Army had never known defeat, and Napoleon was a host in himself. The engagement began with a long artillery contest, for the Emperor was waiting the arrival of his reserves; but the Russians seem to have been the first to move, when the approach of Davoust and his corps, on the right, gave Napoleon an opportunity to attack. The conflict raged for hours with ever changing fortunes, the corps of Augereau, the French centre, was almost destroyed, assailed in a blinding tempest of snow; a furious charge of Murat, with all his cavalry, redressed the balance in Napoleon's favour, but Lestocq, hurrying to the field, held Davoust in

check, and the scale was only just turned, at last, by Ney advancing from the left, by a forced march. The Russian army slowly fell back, but for a few hundred yards only; the battle, in fact, had had no certain results, and night fell on an appalling scene of carnage, where twelve thousand Frenchmen and fifteen thousand Russians lay in their blood on the snows spreading round Eylau.

Napoleon had never fought a battle like this as yet. The Grand Army had been sorely stricken, the corps of Augereau was disbanded, its remains divided among other corps; and apart from these great losses in the field the French suffered terribly from cold and privations. Had Benningsen been a great chief he would have held his positions and scorned retreat; and in that event the Emperor would have been compelled, as he half admitted, to fall back to the Vistula. But the Russian commander retired, though not pursued; his army, too, had been cruelly injured; and this gave his adversary an opportunity to announce to a doubting Europe that he had been victorious. Indomitable constancy we shall see, was not one of Napoleon's distinctive qualities, but he well knew the importance of renown in war; no one could assume a more imposing attitude; and he advanced a little distance from Eylau, and boldly challenged his adversary to another trial of strength.

Yet his position had become very far from safe. A thrill of passion ran through the subject Continent, and he confessed his danger by making overtures to Prussia, still held under his heel, and to Austria, vanquished, but necessarily a foe. These Powers,

however, refused to treat, and the Emperor addressed himself with characteristic energy to prepare to renew the contest and to increase his strength for war. Abandoning the too long line of the Vistula, he placed the Grand Army behind the Passarge; and he made immense and successful exertions to obtain supplies for it in Eastern Prussia, and from the provinces of his new ally, Poland. At the same time he left nothing undone to render his military position safe. He had already reduced the Silesian fortresses, dangerous points on his right flank and rear, and he laid siege to the great place of Dantzig, which threatened his line on the Passarge and the Vistula. Meanwhile he tightened his grasp on conquered Prussia; enormous contributions were levied from the people, and the fortresses on the Elbe, held by French garrisons, were made stages on the way of great reinforcements advancing to join the Grand Army. The Confederation of the Rhine, too, had been increased by the accession of Saxony; the contingents of the Allies were mustered, and Hesse Cassel had been blotted out as a state, as its ruler inclined to the side of England.

The Emperor, however, mainly relied on France, the dominant power, to increase his armies. The practice of anticipating the Conscription began. One hundred and fifty thousand youths were enrolled in this way and enabled tens of thousands of trained soldiers to leave France, and to enter the field; regiments were sent from Italy to the Oder and the Elbe, even Spain was compelled to supply a contingent; a powerful force was despatched to the

Pomeranian coast to repel a threatened British descent from Stralsund, and a great army was arrayed on the Elbe to invade Bohemia should Austria move. By the close of the spring of 1807, the Imperial forces reached the immense aggregate of six hundred and fifty thousand men, between the Seine, the Elbe, and the Passarge; and three hundred thousand of these were in Poland and Germany. Nor did Napoleon, amidst these mighty toils of war neglect the civil affairs of his huge empire. We see him, in his tent at Osterode and Finkenstein, administering, in the minutest details, his centralised and all-controlling government. He props up the finances, tries to promote industry, encourages letters and the education of the young, and keeps a watchful eye on a jealous police; but if the spectacle illustrates his wonderful gifts, it is an example, also, of the essential frailty and the precarious nature of the despotism of one man.

The preparations of Napoleon were complete by the end of May, 1807. The first line of the Grand Army, the corps of Soult, Davoust, Ney, and Bernadotte, were in cantonments on the Passarge; the horsemen of Murat filled the plains round Elbing; the Imperial Guard with the Emperor were near Finkenstein, and Masséna, brought from Italy, Lannes, and Mortier, replacing the disbanded corps of Augereau, were on the Vistula with imposing forces. The collective arrays were about one hundred and eighty thousand strong; the troops, still, for the most part, composed of the warriors of Austerlitz and Jena, had had their wants supplied

by degrees, and were eager to meet their enemy again; and the cavalry, partly strengthened by the Poles, was extremely powerful and ready for the field. On either side the flanks of the Grand Army had been made secure from dangerous attacks; Dantzig had been taken after a memorable siege; Glogau, Breslau, Schweidnitz, and Cüstrin had fallen, and the vast space between the Elbe and the Vistula had been made a base of operations for the French, as safe as that between the Rhine and the Meuse. A great army, commanded by Brune and numbering perhaps one hundred thousand men, had, we have seen, been assembled to observe Austria; troops in thousands were marching from Western Germany, to take part, if required, in the approaching conflict; and Prussia was trodden under foot by the armed multitudes which she was forced to support and even to equip. The modern world had never seen war conducted on such a colossal scale; and except possibly in his efforts to invade England, Napoleon's genius for organisation had never been so apparent. Yet there were two points of weakness in this immense display of military strength that overawed the Continent. The reserves of the Grand Army were now largely made up of auxiliaries of many races and tongues, with no heart in a conqueror's quarrel, and they were rudely treated by their French masters, as the Barbarians were who recruited the Legions. The Emperor's exactions, too, were unable to find adequate means to supply and transport these enormous bodies of men and animals, and of the

impedimenta following in their train; the railways of modern times did not yet exist; and not less than sixty thousand deserters and stragglers were scattered along the rear of the Grand Army, living on pillage, and spreading discontent and disease. To a certain extent the ominous scenes of the invasion of 1812 were foreshadowed.

The arrangements of the Czar had been very different from those of his untiring opponent, though the theatre of war was on the verge of Russia. Alexander, indeed, had been hardly treated by fortune; he had been involved in a war with the Turks caused in the main by Napoleon's arts; a British squadron, sent to the Bosphorus, had been forced to retire from the Dardanelles; and, above all, there had been no British descent from Stralsund, an act of neglect which he resented deeply, for it had enabled Mortier to reach the Vistula, and to give up watching the Pomeranian seaboard. But he had not assembled more than one hundred and twenty-five thousand men to confront the Grand Army upon the Passarge, and the Russians, even in numbers, were greatly overmatched.

In these circumstances a retreat behind the Niemen was Benningsen's only prudent course, and had he adopted this he would have probably saved his army and himself from an immense disaster. The Russian chief, however, made bold by Eylau, tried to repeat the manœuvre of a few months before, and screening the movement as well as he could, he attacked Ney in the first week of June, his corps being somewhat forward and exposed. Ney, how-

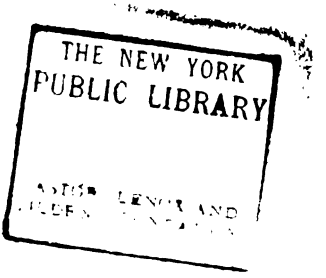
ever, fell back upon his supports at hand; and Napoleon, who now had his army collected, advanced in great force against his rash enemy. Benningsen retreated towards the Upper Alle; the Russians stubbornly repulsed the French at Heilsberg, though forced to abandon a great camp at that place, and Benningsen made by the eastern bank of the Alle for Königsberg, as for a haven of refuge. Napoleon pursued along the western bank, but his army was divided and still behind when a false step of his adversary suddenly gave him an opportunity to gain a decisive victory. Early on the 14th of June, 1807—the anniversary of Marengo—Benningsen crossed the Alle, from Friedland, and occupied the French bank, in the hope of cutting off the advanced corps of Lannes, but the corps of Mortier and other reinforcements came up; Napoleon, Ney, and Victor were ere long on the field; and the Emperor gave orders for a general attack. The Russian centre was broken after fierce resistance, and the terrible effects were then seen of fighting a battle with a river close in the rear. The Russian right wing was driven into the Alle, thousands perishing in the attempt to cross; the shattered centre was crushed in the streets of Friedland, only a part having got across the bridges, which had been half destroyed by the French artillery; and the left wing was involved in the common ruin. The defeated army lost about twenty-five thousand men, and fled to the Niemen in rout and despair.

The victorious French were soon on the Russian frontier; Königsberg, almost the last possession of

the Prussian monarchy, having fallen two or three days after Friedland. The forces of the Czar could resist no longer; troops of Calmucks and Bashkirs, armed with bows and arrows, the last reserves of the exhausted Empire, which had gathered upon the banks of the Niemen, formed a sorry defence against the Grand Army, and Alexander humbly sued for peace. Napoleon, gigantic as his power was, felt his isolation, in the midst of Europe; he had vainly tried to conciliate Prussia and Austria; and he resolved to win Russia over to his side, and to lead the Czar to make an alliance with France. The two sovereigns met on a raft on the Niemen, in the presence of their armies on either bank; French and Russians rejoiced at the prospect of peace, and effusively interchanged friendly words and offices; and Napoleon exercised all the arts of a genius that had a fascinating power, to convert his late enemy into a sincere ally.

The scenes that followed still have an air of romance; the town of Tilsit was made neutral ground, to facilitate the negotiations already begun; the King and Queen of Prussia repaired to the spot, in the hope of saving the fallen monarchy, but were treated, especially the ill-fated Queen, by the conqueror, with ill-concealed contempt; and Napoleon and Alexander, who had completely yielded to the influence of his all-powerful tempter, proceeded, in the first flush of new-born friendship, to arrange, at their will and pleasure, the affairs of Europe. The Treaties of Tilsit, signed in July, 1807, grew out of this diplomatic honeymoon; and though all the

NAPOLEON RECEIVING THE QUEEN OF PRUSSIA AT TILSIT, JULY 6, 1807.
FROM THE PAINTING BY GOSSE NOW IN PALACE OF VERSAILLES.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secret articles have not been made public, their main provisions have long been generally known.*

By this great settlement Prussia was compelled to pay the whole penalty of the late war; she lost her provinces west of the Elbe, and her lately acquired possessions in Poland; she remained ground down by frightful exactions, and she was reduced to the position of a third-rate Power. A kingdom of Westphalia, formed out of the spoils of Prussia and Hesse Cassel, was conferred on Jerôme, the youngest of the Imperial brothers, and became a State of the Confederation of the Rhine; Prussian Poland was bestowed on the King of Saxony,† with the appellation of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, placing a vassal of Napoleon upon the Vistula, and giving the Poles a phantom of hope; and Russia and Prussia both recognised all the new creations of the Napoleonic Empire, including Joseph's right to Naples, and even to Sicily. The subjugation of the West, confirmed by the Czar, seemed thus completely assured; yet this was but a small part of the arrangements of Tilsit. In this, as in all instances, England was the great mark of Napoleon's hostile efforts; and he found Alexander, indignant at recent British policy, a willing co-operator in a colossal scheme to strike mortal blows at the British Empire. Russia was rigorously to carry out the Continental System; a Chinese wall was to be raised along every coast,

* The latest works on the settlement of Tilsit are those of M.M. Vandal and Tatischeff; see also the *Edinburgh Review* for April, 1891.

† In accordance with the traditions of the past, and of French policy.

from Archangel to Trieste, against British commerce; and should England refuse a mediation, which was to be a mere pretence, every navy of the Continent was to be combined against her, and to endeavour to destroy her rule on the seas. Nor was this all; an invasion of India was, not improbably, discussed at Tilsit; and Napoleon was perhaps given a free hand to subjugate Portugal, and even Spain, in order to close the peninsula to British trade. In return for these immense concessions, a vast prospect was opened to Russian ambition. Alexander was encouraged to annex Finland, then a province of Sweden, an old ally of France; a revolution in Turkey gave Napoleon an opportunity to break his engagements with the Porte, and to plan an eventual partition of the Turkish Empire. The Czar, it is believed, was to obtain the region north of the Danube; France was to have Greece, Thessaly, Albania, and perhaps Egypt; and Austria was to be offered the great tract on her eastern frontier. All this, however, was in the future only; the jealousy of Napoleon refused to allow Alexander to think of the dreams of Catherine; Constantinople and the adjoining provinces were, in no case, to become Muscovite spoil.

In these vast projects of overbearing power we see no trace of the wisdom of Napoleon's youth, or even of his profound and masterly statecraft. The settlement of Tilsit was a mere chimera of force; it had not a single stable element; it contained in itself the certainty of its speedy overthrow. Prussia might be struck down at Jena and Auerstadt; but her power had been growing for two centuries; so what

chance, in the long run, had Saxony and Poland, in decay, against her? The humiliation, too, of the people of Frederick the Great, which had emerged, in triumph, from the Seven Years' War, could not continue, for any length of time; and Prussia would ultimately overcome fortune, and be more than ever a deadly foe of France. The creation, besides, of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw necessarily gave umbrage to the three Powers which had divided Poland between them, including Russia, the new ally of France, for it nursed the Poles in the hopes of liberty; and it had a direct and plain tendency to unite Austria, Prussia, and Russia against Napoleon. Nor was the power of the Empire increased by its extension to the Elbe and the Vistula; the subjugation of Germany could not last; and these conquests exasperated the whole Teutonic race.

Yet these were but the main features of a scheme which portended universal war, on the chance of accomplishing universal conquest. England might be compelled to fight for existence, but her navy had never been so supreme; she was the treasurer of a Continent that, at heart, detested, if it dreaded, the French yoke; she had it in her power, as events were to prove, to prevent the conquest of Spain and Portugal; and the projects of a descent on the Indus, and even of a partition of Turkey, were not feasible. Yet not to speak of the bad faith shown by Napoleon to old allies, the worst side of the policy of Tilsit has yet to be noticed. This vast plan of dividing the spoils of Europe rested on the assumption that the Czar and Napoleon would always be cordial

friends, and that Russia and France had no conflicting interests. But what sympathy would really exist between Alexander, a representative, spite of liberal professions, of the old monarchies and aristocracies of the Europe of the past, and the crowned champion of the French Revolution; and how could Russia be always at war with England, and persistently maintain the Continental System, absolutely ruinous to her peculiar commerce? Napoleon, too, had alarmed the Czar, even at Tilsit, by the Grand Duchy of Warsaw; and he had whetted, not satisfied Russian ambition, by giving it hopes of a fragment of the Turkish Empire, and withholding the mighty prize on the Bosphorus. The Treaties of Tilsit, in a word, meant war, confusion, and discord, in every part of Europe; and they embodied an almost self-destructive policy.

The long contest of 1806–7, did not exhibit, in the best aspect, Napoleon's extraordinary gifts as a warrior. The conquering march indeed, by which he cut off and annihilated the scattered forces of Prussia, was a wonderful specimen of skill and energy; and his conduct on the Passarge turned the scale of fortune. But he made mistakes before Jena and Auerstadt; he failed in the brief campaign of Pultusk; he was very nearly defeated at Eylau; and brilliant as Jena and Friedland were, they were not to be compared with the great fight of Austerlitz. Napoleon's faculties, as an administrator, were, however, tried to the utmost, and seen in the fullest grandeur, in his preparations in the spring of 1807; and this is the distinctive excellence of his general-

ship at this time. Yet, as we have pointed out, his gigantic exertions to strengthen and add to the Grand Army, filled it with half-hearted and faithless allies, and brought into it elements of decay; and signs were already not wanting that the Empire was tottering under its own weight. The most striking feature of this time, however, was Napoleon's extravagant policy abroad, exaggerating all its previous excesses. If the settlement of the Continent, after Austerlitz, could not have been, in the nature of things, enduring, the Continental System and the arrangements of Tilsit led directly to fresh usurpations and conquests, to the complete subversion of the order of Europe, and to the arraying of the civilised world against Napoleon. And this reckless scheme of mere brute force, that had universal domination as its end, depended on a compact between two despots, who had many reasons to distrust each other, and between two great States with many opposing interests. Napoleon's dominions were yet to increase; he was to win battles, and to subdue enemies; but Tilsit was no distant cause of a quarrel with Russia, of the catastrophe of 1812, and of the fall of the Empire. The rule of Napoleon had become like a thundercloud streaming against the wind, and doing violence to the forces of nature; let the electrical current be once spent, and the thundercloud ceases to disturb the movement of the elements that resume their normal play.

CHAPTER IX.

Efforts made by Napoleon to enforce the Continental System—Bombardment of Copenhagen—Invasion of Portugal and flight of the Royal Family—Designs of Napoleon against Spain—State of Spain—Rising at Aranjuez—Napoleon obtains from the Spanish Bourbons a renunciation of their rights to the Crown—Joseph Bonaparte proclaimed King of Spain—General rising of the nation—The capitulation of Baylen, and the battle of Vimiero—Napoleon invades Spain in person—Retreat of Moore and battle of Corunna—State of Europe—War with Austria—Battles of Abensberg and Eckmühl—Napoleon marches to Vienna—His attempt to cross the Danube—Battles of Aspern and Essling—Immense efforts made by Napoleon—Battle of Wagram—Peace of Vienna—Reflections.

APOLEON, after his return to France, proceeded at once to make the most of the supremacy he had won at Tilsit. Detachments of the Grand Army were sent to enforce the Continental System on the North German seaboard; British merchandise was seized throughout the Empire, and even British subjects were arbitrarily detained; and at every port from Dantzig to Venice, French functionaries were let loose to plunder and

confiscate. Peremptory messages were, at the same time, despatched to the States subject to, or allies of, France, to join in a crusade against British commerce. The Pope, already changed from the friendly attitude he had assumed in 1802 and 1805, and discontented with the ruler he had crowned, was ordered to close his ports against England. The Regent of Etruria, the new name given to an Infanta of Spain, who had become the Sovereign of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, was compelled to banish British ships from Leghorn; and Portugal was summoned to go to war with England, and to take the severest measures against British trade, of which it had long been a great emporium. Meanwhile, Spain, Austria, and the Lesser Maritime States, were urged, or required, to get their fleets in readiness for an attack on England; and Napoleon made immense preparations to show an imposing naval force on the seas. He had, since Trafalgar, sent out light squadrons, on several expeditions, against British colonies; he had continued building numbers of war ships; and he now resolved to make a great effort to rule the Mediterranean, at least for a time. He equipped an armament to invade Sicily, not yet annexed to the Crown of Joseph; and he made extraordinary exertions to establish the ascendency of France in the Ionian Islands, and especially, in their chief centre, Corfu, with a view probably to designs in the East, which had always had a fascination for his mind, and which, we have seen, had been discussed at Tilsit. The whole power of the Continent was thus to be turned

against England and her maritime rule; and Napoleon believed, a few weeks after Friedland, that he would force his stubborn enemy to yield to his terms.

In these circumstances, the British government, compelled to fight for existence, in a death struggle, adopted a course which has been very differently judged, and which the direst necessity could alone justify. A new ministry had been for some time in office, an aged Whig, Portland, being its nominal head; but Canning and Castlereagh were its leading spirits; and these statesmen, daring and young, having been informed of some of the secret provisions of Tilsit, had resolved to anticipate Napoleon's strokes, and to prevent one of the chief of the Lesser States from placing its naval means in his hands. A powerful fleet and army were sent to the Baltic, and Denmark was required to give up her war ships, to be held by England, until the close of the war, so that no hostile use could be made of them. On the refusal of the Danes to accept these conditions, Copenhagen was bombarded with extreme severity, and the fleet of Denmark was carried into British ports.

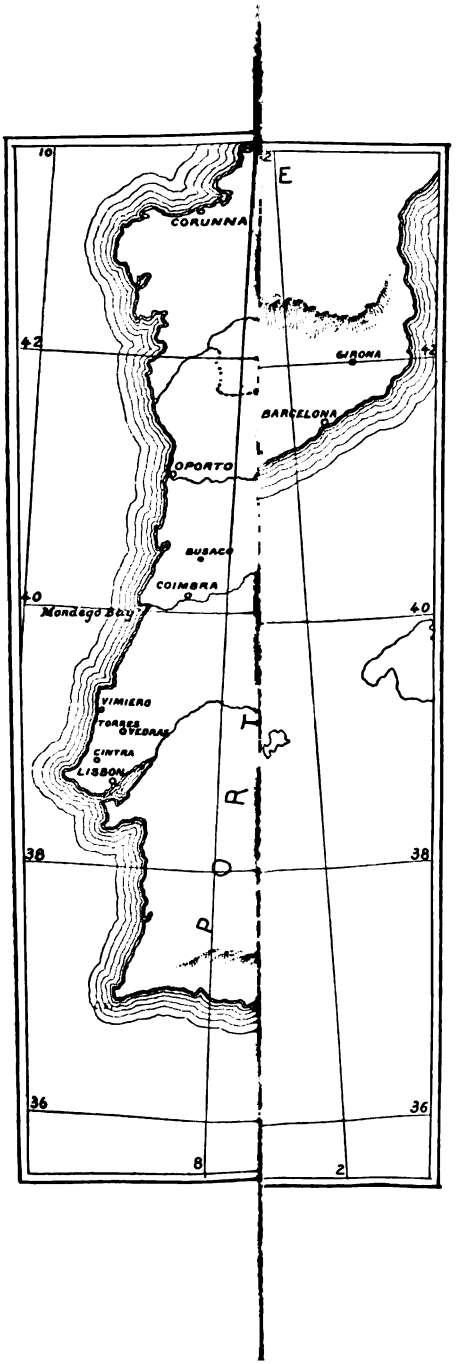
This tremendous measure, a most striking instance of the disregard of the rights of neutrals, which characterised an age of internecine war, and of very doubtful policy at best, provoked indignation and fear on the Continent, and turned it, for a short time, against England. Napoleon skilfully made use of this passing sentiment. He persuaded Austria, for a moment, to break with Great Britain,

and he seized the opportunity to carry out projects on which he had brooded, perhaps, for months, and which had probably been put forward at Tilsit. He had long cast his eyes on the Iberian Peninsula, and partly in order to further the Continental System, and partly urged by an ambition that now stopped at nothing, he had marked it out as a new domain for conquest. The Portuguese government had tried to elude compliance with his imperious commands to fight England and to despoil her trade; and this was made an occasion to invade Portugal, and to endeavour to annex it to the all-encroaching Empire. In the autumn of 1807, a French army, commanded by Junot, was despatched from Bayonne, and having occupied parts of Spain on its way, was hurried by forced marches to Lisbon, Junot's orders being to seize the capital, and to turn a deaf ear to every kind of overture. The terrified Regent and the Royal Family abandoned a kingdom they could not defend; they took refuge in the Brazilian Provinces, having put to sea at a moment's notice; and Napoleon had soon proclaimed, in characteristic language, that the House of Braganza had ceased to reign.

His attention was next directed to Spain. Here, too, an effete dynasty of old Europe was to be violently or otherwise driven from the throne, and a scion of the conquering House of Bonaparte was to replace the last scions of the House of Bourbon, who retained the position of kings in a changed world. But by what means, and on what pretext, could this revolution, which would recall the days

of the War of the Spanish Succession, be accomplished, even in an age of war, and of universal confusion and trouble? Spain had been almost the first Power to desert the Coalition of 1793; she had for fifteen years been a vassal of France; she had slavishly followed in Napoleon's wake; she had lost colonies and fleets in carrying out his behests, and she had lately despatched a large armed force as an auxiliary of the Grand Army in the North. Nay, as if to oppose an insuperable bar to the project now entertained by the Emperor, she had just agreed to a secret treaty for the dismemberment and partition of Portugal, by which she was to obtain an illusory share of the spoil, and she had marched an army to support Junot. Blunted as the conscience of Europe was by the excesses of a revolutionary time, it would hardly tolerate, in this position of affairs, the subjugation of Spain by Napoleon's hands.

The conqueror, however, believed that he had the means of compassing his intended ends, without a recourse to extreme violence, in the corruption and weakness of the Spanish monarchy, and in the divisions of the Spanish Court; and he sought for a justification for himself and his policy in a hope, which was, no doubt, sincere, that he would raise a great nation from its fallen state. For a generation the Spain of Charles III. had been an object of the scorn of Europe; a Power that ruled a world-wide Empire had sunk into complete decrepitude; the navy, after Trafalgar, had become a set of hulks; the army had been reduced to a few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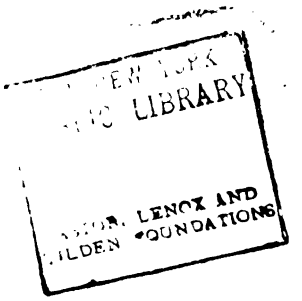
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worthless regiments; the government was a worn-out despotism resting on a bad *noblesse* and a superstitious Church. Authority, too, in its highest seats, had been degraded, and provoked contempt; the King, Charles IV., was an imbecile trifler; the Queen an adulterous and shameless harlot; and the administration of affairs had become the appanage of Godoy, a low-born schemer, who owed his rank to the evil passions of the Queen. The nation, proud and with great qualities, detested the humiliation it had long endured; it sighed for a change to a better state of things, and its hopes had centred in the heir-apparent to the crown, Ferdinand, the Prince of Asturias, who, as yet unknown, was looked up to as a coming deliverer. The young Prince, however, as he grew up to manhood, became a deadly enemy of Godoy; the King and Queen joined in hatred of their son, and were more than ever mere tools of the favourite, and the Court separated into hostile factions, the one trusting to the existing rulers, the other passionately upheld by the People.

In this state of affairs Godoy charged Ferdinand with conspiring against the Royal Authority; scenes of scandal and discord were made public; and the King, the Queen, the Prince, and the favourite, appealed in turn to the Emperor of the French, long recognised as their real lord and master. This gave Napoleon an opportunity to intervene. He spoke smooth words to his eager suppliants, keeping them in suspense, and hiding his purpose; and on various pretexts he gradually

introduced a formidable armed force into Spain, taking possession of the Pyrenean fortresses, and establishing his hold on the northern frontier. The nation greeted these legions of conquest, in the first instance as friends and deliverers, for an opinion prevailed that Napoleon's object was to banish Godoy and to make Ferdinand king; and the French troops were allowed to spread over the country for some time without a sign of resistance. But the favourite was more cunning or better informed; he saw at least that the end of his power was at hand, and he persuaded the feeble King and his worthless consort to imitate the example of the House of Braganza, to fly beyond the Atlantic to the colonies of the West, and to wait there in safety the issue of events.

His preparations were, however, frustrated; a rising at Aranjuez which, beyond dispute, represented the feelings of all true Spaniards, prevented the departure of the royal fugitives; Godoy was nearly slain by a furious populace, and Charles IV., in the hope of saving "his friend," signed an abdication in favour of his son. Ferdinand was thus suddenly raised to the throne, but the weak father ere long repented of an act he declared extorted by force; and the monarchy thus, so to speak, became vacant, betrayed in a disgraceful family quarrel. The purpose which Napoleon had for some time formed seemed strangely favoured in this way by fortune; he was already master of a third of the country; he had sent Murat as his lieutenant to Madrid, and Murat, faithfully carrying out his orders, announced

that the Emperor would not recognise the Prince of Asturias as King of Spain, and would himself decide on the claims to the throne. Symptoms of insurrection, at last followed by a fierce popular outbreak at Madrid, seemed to portend revolution at hand; and, partly led by their weak impulses, but principally induced by the artful lures set before them by Napoleon and Murat, Ferdinand and, ere long, the old King and Queen, took their departure from Spain to lay the tale of their wrongs and disputes before their all-powerful arbiter.

Napoleon received the wanderers near Bayonne; the poor things, fascinated by his over-mastering spell, were informed that the Bourbons could not reign in Spain, and after scandalous scenes between the son and his parents, renunciations were easily obtained of the noblest of the crowns of Charles V. The exiles went into gilded captivity; and Joseph Bonaparte, leaving his kingdom of Naples bestowed on Murat for the part he had played as an accomplice in an evil intrigue, was proclaimed Monarch of Spain and the Indies. His title received the sanction of a small body of Spanish notables assembled at Bayonne—creatures ready to worship the rising sun—and Napoleon thought he had set a crown to his policy by giving a new constitution to Spain, which placed the monarchy on a broad basis, and contained institutions chiefly borrowed from those established in France since 1789.

The detractors of Napoleon have been numerous and unjust, but impartial history severely reprobates

his policy at this juncture. He certainly believed * that his intervention in Spain would regenerate a country under a bad government, and the Spanish Bourbons courted and deserved their fate. He was also convinced that the Continental System, on the carrying out of which he had set his heart, required that the peninsula should be subject to France, and it must be borne in mind that, in this instance, as in that of the unfortunate Duc d'Enghien, he acted more or less under the advice of Talleyrand †—as a rule an advocate of moderation and right—who, having exchanged the position of Foreign Minister for that of a dignitary of the French Empire, endeavoured to regain his lost influence by urging Napoleon to dismember Spain, however he may have condemned the acts done at Bayonne.

But when this has been said nothing can excuse the perfidy of sending, on false pretences, an armed force into Spain, in order to effect the subjugation of a confiding people, of enticing the Royal Family into France, and of compelling it, in terror, to give up its rights. It is not easy to find a parallel to this evil statecraft of fraud and force, and if Napoleon's stratagems are admirable in war, they have sometimes a revolting aspect in the field of politics. The conqueror's hopes that the submission of Spain could be easily effected were to be frustrated, with

* The evidence of this is complete and decisive. See for one of the latest proofs on the subject, General Marbot's most valuable *Memoirs*, tome ii., 41.

† This is also established in the most convincing manner. The faint denials of Talleyrand (*Memoirs*, tome i., 385) really convict him, and he admits that he recommended the dismemberment of Spain.

consequences of the most momentous kind; and the *coup d'état* at Bayonne was, in time, to prove a principal cause of the fall of the Empire. Notwithstanding the corruption and decay of the State, the Spanish people had not lost its essential character; it was still a noble and patriotic race; it possessed local franchises which retained life, under a centralised and half-feudal monarchy; and it broke out into a tempest of wrath when it found that it had been tricked by Napoleon, that its princes had been decoyed out of Spain, and that a foreigner had been insidiously made its sovereign. The peasants of Asturias were the first to rise against the usurped power of Joseph; the insurrection spread like an all-mastering flame from the plains of Castile to the Valencian seaboard; Andalusia flocked to a man to arms, and Galicia and Leon joined in a movement spontaneous, general, and of terrible strength. In an incredibly short time every province was organised under local *juntas*, directing the revolt; rude levies in thousands hastened to increase the regular troops of the fallen monarchy; the large towns prepared to defend their citizens as they had resisted Carthage and long-baffled Rome; and bands of armed men—the savage guerillas—were to be found everywhere, incited to vengeance by a priesthood fearing for their threatened shrines, and proclaiming war to the knife with the foreigner. This sudden revolution—for it was no less—was stained by many excesses and deeds of blood. It presented some of the hideous features of Jacobinism and the Reign of Terror, but it was not the less a grand popular rising against

a domination justly abhorred, and it was as worthy of admiration as the efforts of France against the Coalition of 1793.

Napoleon had never had, hitherto, to deal with a movement of this kind; contempt of popular forces, we have often seen, was a distinctive feature of his strongly-marked character; and he treated the rising of Spain at first with scorn. He had, not to speak of his army in Portugal, eighty thousand men in the Spanish peninsula. Trained soldiers could overwhelm rude levies, and he sent out detachments east, west, and south, to put down the insurrection at its birth, neglecting his accustomed methods in war. In a few weeks he was cruelly undeceived; and for the first time in his career of triumphs, his arms suffered great and even disgraceful reverses. His disciplined troops, indeed, quickly dispersed mere armed multitudes in the open field; Bessières won a battle at Rio Seco, which was little more than a pursuit and a massacre; Joseph entered Madrid and held the city down; and the French crushed resistance in the provinces of the North. But Moncey was driven in retreat from Valencia; Duhêsme was isolated in Catalonia, and, except between the Pyrenees and the capital, the scattered French forces were too feeble to make head against the universal revolt. Meanwhile the remains of the French fleet, beaten at Trafalgar, were seized at Cadiz; and ere long a terrible tale of disaster spread far and wide through the southern provinces.

Dupont, a young general of fairest promise, had been sent by Napoleon into Andalusia. He had ad-

vanced to Cordova and sacked the town, but he had been obliged to fall back through hosts of enemies; and he was caught in the defiles of the Sierra Morena, hemmed in by the regular Spanish army near Baylen and forced to capitulate on humiliating terms. Nearly twenty thousand men of the French army were thus cut off at a single stroke, but the moral effect was far more decisive; Joseph and his Court took flight from Madrid, and in a few weeks the Imperial forces, baffled and paralysed, were behind the Ebro. About the same time a disaster of a similar kind befell the arms of France in Portugal. Sir Arthur Wellesley, a chief who was to rise to greatness, and already known for his victory of Assaye, landed at Mondego Bay in August, 1808, and at the head of about eighteen thousand men, advanced along the coast-line towards Lisbon, which was rising against the yoke of the French. He was attacked boldly at Vimiero by Junot with a somewhat inferior force; but the French general was completely defeated, and he might have been cut off and destroyed, had not Wellesley, in the very hour of success, been superseded in his command by a timid veteran officer. As it was, however, the position of the French in Portugal had become desperate; and Junot was too glad to extricate himself, through a convention signed at Cintra, which assured his army a safe return to France in British transports.

The indignation of Napoleon may well be conceived, when the intelligence of these unexpected disasters arrived. He let Junot off with a repri-

mand; but he was wounded to the quick by the surrender of Baylen, which he justly thought a dishonour to his arms; and Dupont was detained in prison until the close of his reign. As for the rising in Spain, he still believed that "force and reforms" would easily put it down; but he made great preparations to cross the Pyrenees, and to "plant his eagles on the pillars of Hercules." Large detachments were drawn from the Grand Army, which had been gradually moved towards the Rhenish Provinces, and was for the present called the Army of the Rhine; the territory between the Oder and Vistula was, for the most part, evacuated by the French; and one hundred and sixty thousand men, the flower and pride of the Imperial armies, were rapidly directed to the peninsula. A treaty, too, was made with down-trodden Prussia, relieving her of some of the exactions of 1807; but her army was arbitrarily reduced one half, an act of oppression eluded afterwards with results that cost the Empire dear. The conqueror, in a word, though making light of the resistance of Spain, as "a stirring of the canaille," made arrangements for an immense display of his power, in order, chiefly, to overawe Europe; and he turned his attention to his great ally of the North, still under the spell of the dalliance of Tilsit.

Alexander crossed the Niemen to meet Napoleon at Erfurt, not far from the field of Jena; and the interview was a strange and suggestive spectacle. The Czar inclined before the Lord of the West; the vassal Princes of the Confederation of the Rhine

vied with each other in bowing the knee to their suzerain, and in seeking his gifts; * and scenes of base flattery mingled with pageants of splendour never before witnessed. The intellect of Germany, too, yielded to the fascinations of Napoleon's presence. Goethe and Wieland appeared in the train of worshippers, and the mighty despot discussed with the enchanted poets, the French stage, and the "falsehoods of Tacitus," an object of the dislike of all despots. This trifling, however, did not interfere with the great affairs of state that had led to the meeting. Napoleon, in view of events in Spain, felt that it was not enough to dazzle the Czar with prospects of a new Empire in the East, as had been really his policy at Tilsit; and he consented, though with secret reluctance, that Moldavia and Wallachia should be torn from the Turks, and, under certain conditions, be annexed to Russia. In return, the alliance was formally renewed. Alexander consented to the subjugation of Spain, and England was summoned by the two potentates, to submit to an ignominious peace, which would have set the seal to the domination of France, would have given a sanction to all Napoleon's conquests, and would have recognised the late usurpation of Joseph.

Trusting to the support of the Czar in the North, Napoleon invaded Spain, in the winter of 1808, at the head of nearly two hundred and fifty thousand men. The Spanish levies had been reinforced, by

* Talleyrand, a cynic, but an admirable observer, expresses unequivocally his disgust at the adulation of Erfurt. *Mémoires*, tome i., 420, 451.

the contingent which had been sent into Germany, and which had effected its escape in British vessels; but they were unable to face the French in the field; and they had been imprudently moved towards the Pyrenean frontier. They were struck down, and scattered in flight, at Espinosa and Tudela, to the left and the right; the Somo Sierra Pass was forced by a fine effort made by the Polish horsemen; and Napoleon entered Madrid in triumph, where he replaced Joseph on his precarious throne. The conqueror thought the peninsula was in his grasp; but the hydra-headed revolt still grew. The routed armies gradually gathered again; insurgent bands made repeated attacks on the long line of march from Bayonne to the capital; and the invaders were beset by the same kind of obstacles which had prevented their success in Poland,—they could not find supplies in a poor country, or move rapidly through mountainous ranges and defiles.

Ere long, too, Saragossa made the memorable defence that will live in history. The flower of the army of Lannes perished before its walls; the city, defying the skill of the engineer, was conquered only by furious assaults forcing street after street, and house upon house, and every town in Spain learned by a grand example what patriotism could do even behind weak ramparts. Napoleon, meantime, had broken up from Madrid, in the hope of crushing a new and scarcely expected enemy. The British army, which had won Vimiero, had been placed under the command of Moore, a soldier of no ordinary powers; and Moore had advanced from Portu-

gal in order to effect his junction with a small force, under Baird, and in the hope of threatening the French communications with Madrid. Moore had approached Valladolid near the middle of December. He was at Sahagun, a few days afterwards, with from thirty to thirty-five thousand men, and Napoleon arranged a great general movement to cut off and overwhelm the British commander. The Emperor crossed the Guadarrama, in a furious hurricane; his passionate eagerness to reach Moore was shown in the hardships he made his troops endure; and he confidently hoped that with Soult and Ney he would soon have his quarry in the toils. He had advanced to Astorga, in the first days of January; but alarming intelligence reached him from France; and in a few hours he was on his way to Paris, having entrusted the task of pursuing Moore to Soult. The retreat of the British army was arduous in the extreme, but its chief made good his way to Corunna; he beat Soult off in a bloody combat, and, though wounded to death, Moore lived to know that his troops were safe and about to embark for England.

Troubles of many kinds awaited the Emperor when, after a hurried journey, he reached the capital. His efforts at sea had, as always, failed; Ganteaume had been unable to land a man in Sicily, and he had narrowly escaped destruction at the hands of Collingwood. England, too, the detested, yet dreaded, foe, had rejected Napoleon's and Alexander's terms; she had found a battle-field in the peninsula, favourable, in a special way, to her arms.

Though she was suffering from the Continental System, her command of the seas still upheld her commerce; the development of her manufacturing power immensely increased her wealth and resources; and she steadily resolved to maintain the contest. The Spanish war, besides, had alarmed France; the Empire, it was seen, had become a scheme of dynastic ambition, and never-ceasing conquest; and opinion had already begun to doubt its stability, and to distrust its creator. Nor was the aspect of the Continent serene; a movement, feeble as yet, but increasing, against French domination and rapine, had begun even in the States of the Confederation of the Rhine, and was restrained, with difficulty, in oppressed Prussia; the party hostile to France in Russia, made half bankrupt by the war with England, was becoming ascendent in the councils of the Czar; and Alexander himself had found that Tilsit had formed an alliance fraught with many perils.

The attitude of Austria, however, was the chief immediate cause of alarm for Napoleon. That great State, humbled by Austerlitz and the Peace of Presburg, had only waited an opportunity to renew the contest. She had stirred for a moment after Eylau, and she now believed that the time had come for recovering her old position in Europe. She had secretly renewed her alliance with England, and the direction into Spain of great French armies, the agitation arising in Germany, and the revolt of the Tyrol, her lost loyal province, against Bavaria, a vassal of France, combined to determine her purpose for war. She relied chiefly, however, on her own

armaments, and these had become not only formidable in the extreme, but were of a character differing in many respects from those hitherto arrayed by the Austrian monarchy. The Archduke Charles had for some time had the supreme direction of military affairs; he had largely increased the regular army, but he had connected with it great national levies, filled with a strong patriotic spirit and eager to avenge the wrongs of their country. Austria by these means was enabled to place nearly four hundred thousand men in the field; and these forces were of a much higher order than the serf-like troops of 1796, of 1800, and of 1805.

Napoleon's power, therefore, defied by England, diminishing in France, and losing its hold on Russia, was, throughout the Continent, assailed by forces with which hitherto he had not had to cope. The spirit of national independence and national right was, gradually arising against armed Despotism, and even Austria had inscribed this cause on her banners. The conqueror, however, prepared to take the field with confidence; he moved the available divisions of the old Grand Army from the Main and the Rhine towards the Upper Danube; he called for the contingents of the Confederation of the Rhine, and he entreated the Czar to send a Russian army to cooperate with a levy of Poles and to oppose Austria on her Galician frontier. Nevertheless his forces, reduced by the war in Spain, were not for the moment in adequate strength; and he was compelled largely to fill their ranks with young soldiers, and, in view of the impending conflict, to anticipate the

conscription once more, and even to increase the tale of its numbers.

Austria, in fact, was ready before Napoleon, and in the second week of April, 1809, her main army, led by the Archduke Charles, and about one hundred and fifty thousand strong, crossed the Inn and the Isar, and advanced towards Ratisbon in order to join a large detachment at that place, and, with the combined force, to assail the enemy. The Emperor, anticipating a movement of the kind, had directed his lieutenants on the spot to fall back; but his order was neglected for some unknown reason, and the French army was for some time most dangerously exposed and widely divided, Davoust isolated and liable to attack at Ratisbon, Masséna at Ulm, and Oudinot at Augsburg, and the Bavarians and other allies between the Isar and Ingolstadt. Napoleon, however, was soon on the scene of events, and he extricated his imperilled forces, and ultimately baffled and defeated his foe, who had made no use of a great occasion, in a series of operations which will always rank among the finest masterpieces of war. Drawing in Davoust, on the left, from Ratisbon, he brought the Marshal in line with the German auxiliaries; he then moved Oudinot and Masséna with extreme celerity to threaten the Austrian communications with the Inn; and having collected a considerable force, he suddenly fell on the Archduke's centre and routed it at Abensberg with great loss. Napoleon now joined Masséna and Oudinot and forced the Austrian left wing across the Isar;

and, turning against the Archduke again, who had united his right wing with his beaten centre, overthrew him at Eckmühl with decisive effect, and drove him at Ratisbon across the Danube. Here the Prince was met by the expected detachment, but he was cut off from his shattered left wing and divided from it by a great river; and the first effort of Austria had completely failed. Napoleon had plucked safety and victory out of danger, and his collective forces, compared to those of the enemy, had been inferior in numbers.

Commanding genius had once more triumphed; and, notwithstanding ominous warnings, Fortune appeared still to second the great captain. On other parts of the theatre of war, success had, at first, attended the arms of Austria. Though she had not repeated the faults of 1800 and 1805, and had not sent into Italy too large an army, the Archduke John had defeated Eugene Beauharnais—improperly placed in supreme command owing to Napoleon's family sympathies—at Sacile, near the Venetian frontier; and the French had been driven back to the line of the Adige. The Tyrolese, too, inspired by an heroic chief, Hofer, had risen in an insurrection, general and fierce like that which convulsed the Spanish peninsula; and, aided by a detachment of Austrian troops, had driven their Bavarian masters out of their Alpine ranges. But the success of Napoleon at the decisive point, the valley of the Danube—the path to Vienna—soon made these secondary triumphs fruitless; the Archduke John was compelled to retreat, pursued by Eugene, across

the Noric Alps; and the revolt of the Tyrol was quenched in blood. The Emperor pushed forward to the Austrian capital, but this march was not undisputed like that of 1805; a desperate battle was fought at Ebersberg, and the defeated left wing of the Austrian army found means to escape beyond the Danube, and to join the main force of the Archduke Charles.

The French entered Vienna on the 13th of May; the House of Hapsburg had again fled; but Napoleon, as before Austerlitz, flattered the townsmen; and, having taken most careful precautions to protect the flanks and rear of his army, sought an occasion to bring his enemy to bay, and to strike him down in a decisive battle. The task, however, was one of immense difficulty; the Emperor had not, as in 1805, mastered the bridges leading across the Danube; and how was an army of one hundred thousand men to pass a river, wide as an arm of the sea, in the face of a powerful and watchful enemy? To effect his purpose, Napoleon chose an island known in history by the name of Lobau, below Vienna, of large size, which separates the Danube into two branches, the one broad along the southern bank, the other, along the northern bank, narrow; and he threw a great bridge, from the shore, into Lobau, connecting the island with the northern bank, by other bridges of no considerable size. The passionate eagerness, however, to close with his foe, shown, we have seen clearly, in many instances, nearly involved his army in an immense disaster. There was but a single bridge across the main branch of

the Danube; the French crossed by this into Lobau; and thence, traversing the small bridges, issued into the edge of the great plain of the Marchfield, and seized Aspern and Essling on the northern bank. The Archduke, disposing of very superior forces, attacked furiously on the 21st and 22d of May; but Aspern and Essling were strong defensive points; and the battle raged for hours with no certain results. The imprudence, however, was seen at last, of trusting to a single bridge only to transport a large army across a wide river; the great bridge was more than once broken down, and was finally destroyed by the flooded current, and by combustible masses launched against it; ammunitions and other necessaries for the field fell short; and the French were left isolated on the northern bank. Lannes met a soldier's death in the struggle; Masséna defended Aspern with characteristic energy; but the villages were, in a short time, lost, and the Imperial army was driven into Lobau.

Napoleon had made a grave mistake in relying on only a single bridge; and had his adversary been a great chief, he might have forced his enemy into the Danube. The position of the French had become most critical; thousands of men were huddled together on an exposed island, with difficult access to their supports; and the marshals urged the Emperor to draw off his forces, and to retreat to the Inn, nay, perhaps to the Rhine. Napoleon rejected these counsels of despair; and assuming the proud and confident attitude, which, after Eylau, had overawed Europe, determined on maintaining a daring offen-

sive. Yet the intelligence from France had become alarming; the invasion of Spain had not prospered; at this very time Wellesley had surprised Soult, and driven him in confusion from the Douro; and preparations were being made in British ports for a vast expedition to destroy Antwerp.

The Emperor's operations were as wonderful as any, perhaps, in his career as a warrior. Having collected his forces on the southern bank—a tacit admission of an undoubted error—he addressed himself to the stupendous work of "making a highway of the Danube," and transporting across a largely increased army. Three wide and solid bridges, one of boats, two of piles, protected from the current by a huge stockade, and by a flotilla of armed barges, were thrown across the main arm of the river; and the lesser arm was so effectually bridged that thousands of men could cross in a brief space of time. Meanwhile Lobau had been turned into a great entrenched camp, bristling with redoubts and well-placed batteries; and thus, while the passage of the Danube had been made secure, the island became a colossal fortress, most formidable either for defence or attack. Simultaneously Napoleon took his wonted care to shield his communications and line of retreat; and fearing that the Archduke might change his position, and cross the Danube for an offensive movement, he sent strong detachments to guard the chief passages. At the same time, with that marvellous power of organisation and arrangement peculiar to him, he summoned every available horse and man to join the main army on the Danube,

and to take part in the great battle at hand. Eugene, now receiving the aid of Macdonald, was ordered to drive away the Archduke John in retreat through the vast plains of Hungary, and to draw gradually towards Lobau. Bernadotte and a Saxon contingent advanced from the north, thousands of troops from the Confederation of the Rhine, and large masses of young conscripts were marched to join the Emperor's standards; and Marmont, with one of the old bands of Austerlitz, was ordered to the Danube from the Dalmatian wilds. The assembled arrays were imposing and vast; yet elements of weakness abounded in them. The first line of the French at Eylau and Friedland was mainly composed of trained soldiers; the bad troops only filled the reserves; but now, Germans, Italians, and beardless boys were crowded into the ranks of the Imperial army, and most of these levies had no heart to fight. Another incident, too, betrayed the gradual exhaustion of military power,—the feebleness of the infantry had become manifest, and it was attempted to make up for this by an increase of guns, a dangerous and at best a doubtful expedient.

The preparations of the Emperor to cross the Danube were completed by the first days of July. What, in the meantime, had been the conduct of his foe, victorious, in effect, at Aspern and Essling? The Archduke Charles was a learned soldier; he was a good general of the second order; but he was no more able to cope with Napoleon than Pompey and his nobles were, to contend against Cæsar. He was in the heart of the Austrian monarchy; but he

had made little use of the martial levies, which had been arrayed to maintain the war; and he did not even gather together, to the main scene of events, all the available strength of the regular army. An Austrian force was on the Galician frontier; the Czar had trifled with Napoleon's request, to send a body of troops to hold it in check, and Russians, indeed, would not support Poles; yet the Archduke did not call in this detachment, to co-operate with him, upon the Danube. If, too, he had directed the Archduke John, to advance from Hungary to his aid, he had not secured his brother's obedience; and the Archduke John, kept away by Eugene, was still far distant, and not willing to move. The Archduke Charles, besides, had not fathomed the designs, or the capacity, of his mighty antagonist; he was convinced that Napoleon had not the means of effecting the passage, with a great army, and he remained in his camps, on the low hills of the Marchfield, neglecting the tract on the verge of the river. Worse than all, perhaps, the Austrian chief was overawed by Napoleon's presence; and his operations betrayed a timidity * and an indecision of sinister omen.

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* The terror felt by Continental generals, when opposed to Napoleon, may be expressed by the lines of Virgil:

"At Danaum proceres, Agamemnoniæque phalanges,
Ut vidêre virum, fulgentiaque arma per umbras,
Ingenti trepidare metu."

"Mais, Monseigneur, figurez vous qu'an lieu de Bonaparte, c'est Jourdan que vous avez devant vous," was the remark of an aide-de-camp to his trembling superior.

The gigantic enterprise planned by Napoleon began in the night of the 4th of July. The most minute and far-sighted precautions had been taken to prevent mistakes and confusion; the Imperial army had been assembled in Lobau; and under cover of the darkness, and of the fire of batteries sweeping the northern bank, with an avalanche of shot, the French divisions, crossed the small arm of the Danube, mastered thoroughly by bridges as firm as causeways, and issued into the vast plain of the Marchfield, turning Aspern and Essling far to the left, and spreading over the undefended expanse. Seventy thousand men had passed by the morning of the 5th; the whole of the great array came gradually into line; and, by the afternoon, Napoleon's collective forces had taken their positions in the Archduke's front, between Glinzendorf and Aderklau, having crossed the Danube, under the eye of an enemy baffled, outmanœuvred, and almost paralysed. The Austrians, in fact, had scarcely made a sign; and after a skirmish with Bernadotte's Saxons, in which these were decidedly worsted, both armies prepared for a great fight on the morrow.

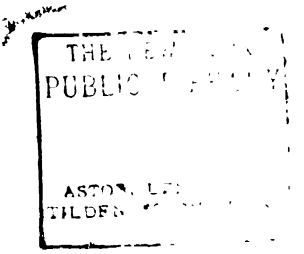
The early dawn of the 6th saw the hostile forces engaged along the immense line of outposts. Armies of such a size had never before been seen, on one field, in modern war; Napoleon was at the head of about one hundred and sixty thousand men with from five to six hundred guns; the Archduke had perhaps one hundred and thirty thousand with nearly the same number of guns as his enemy. The Austrian Prince assumed the offensive; he

extended his wings on either side; and his left fell on Napoleon's right, for he expected the Archduke John would advance by the plain that leads to Nieusidel by the Russbach. This attack, however, was repelled by Davoust, placed in formidable strength on that flank by his master, aware that the Archduke John was approaching; and the French gradually gained ground between Glinzendorf, the Russbach, and the uplands beyond. But on the opposite side of the vast space of battle, the Archduke won important success; his right wing all but routed Napoleon's left; Bernadotte and his men were driven back in confusion; and all the energy of Masséna could not prevent thousands of auxiliaries, and of young French levies, from disbanding and scattering over the Marchfield. The skill of Napoleon, nevertheless, triumphed. His adversary had extended his wings too widely; the Emperor strengthened his shattered left, assembled the Italian army backed by the Guard, and preceded by such an array of cannon as never had been put together before, directed Macdonald, against the Archduke's centre, in position upon the hills of Wagram. The defeat of the Austrians, at this decisive point, after a resistance of the most tenacious kind,* gave the French a hard bought and almost doubtful victory. The Archduke Charles slowly fell back, just as the heads of his brother's columns appeared; and had the Austrian prince had Welling-

* The battle of Wagram has a strong general resemblance to that of Sadowa. But Napoleon was not Benedek, and the Archduke John was not the Crown Prince of Prussia.

NAPOLEON AT WAGRAM.

FROM THE PAINTING BY VERNET IN THE GALLERY AT VERSAILLES.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ton's constancy, or the Archduke John Blücher's heroic energy, something like Waterloo might have been seen at Wagram.

Austria, however, had made a final effort; Napoleon, indeed, did not pursue the defeated army with his wonted vigour, for he had suffered too much loss; the Archduke effected his retreat in safety; but the monarchy was, for the time, exhausted, and envoys were soon sent to the conqueror's tent. The negotiations were protracted for weeks, for the Austrian plenipotentiaries wished to see the result of the descent on the shores of the Scheldt, which had been announced by England to Europe. This expedition, however, ignominiously failed; the British fleet never reached Antwerp; and half a fine army perished by disease, in the pestilence-stricken flats of Walcheren. Austria was forced to accept Napoleon's dictation; and his terms, if not outrageous, were humiliating in the extreme. She lost her Alpine frontier on the side of Italy; she lost the barrier of the Inn on the side of Bavaria, and—a hint probably to the Czar, from the conqueror, that he resented the apathy of Russia in the campaign, and that Tilsit was not an irrevocable bond—she was compelled to cede a part of her Galician provinces, to be annexed to the Saxon Poland formed on the Vistula. She was also obliged to submit to the insulting wrong done, a short time before, to vanquished Prussia; her army was reduced to one hundred and fifty thousand men, a number not to be exceeded until a general peace. This treaty which marks the lowest point of the

fortunes of Austria, in that age, was signed at Vienna in October, 1809.

Napoleon's military genius shone out grandly in the memorable campaign of 1809. He has described the operations that led to Eckmühl as the finest of his splendid career; and his passage of the Danube was a magnificent exploit. Not less remarkable was his tenacious daring in defying fortune after Aspern and Essling; and though the Archduke Charles was not to be compared to him, he was by no means a contemptible foe. Still, from a mere military point of view, the capacity of the Emperor is not the most striking feature of this great contest. The Austrians at Wagram had the better army; they fought with remarkable vigour; except the Bavarians, always foes of Austria, the auxiliaries of Napoleon were inferior troops; the young French levies were too weak for the field; and Wagram was only a Pyrrhic victory. The strength of the Empire was wasting in universal war. Napoleon, at this time, had the colossal force of eight hundred thousand men under arms, and yet this scarcely upheld his overgrown power. While, too, his resources were being sapped, mighty forces were being combined against him, unknown in the first years of his triumphs; he had to deal with nations, and not only with kings; and the rising of Spain, the revolt of the Tyrol, and the movement gradually arousing Germany, were ominous signs of coming peril.

Nor was he less the enemy of established governments; he was abhorred in Austria and Prussia alike; and the recent extension of the Grand Duchy

of Warsaw, another expression of sympathy with the Poles, impaired still more the alliance of Tilsit, already opposed to Russian feelings and interests. Even in France, also, Napoleon had ceased to be the idol of an enthusiastic nation; mutterings of discontent and alarm were being heard; and these were of special danger in the case of a people always in extremes and easily moved, and in which Revolution had destroyed real loyalty. And just across the Channel stood undaunted England, impossible to reach by the Imperial legions, strong enough to defy the Continental System, victorious in Portugal, and not defeated in Spain, able, through her absolute supremacy at sea, to throw armies on any point of the Continent, and, above all, ready, at any moment, to unite the Powers of Europe against her great enemy, and to multiply their resources by her lavish subsidies. The prospect was darkening for Napoleon, yet he had not reached the most dazzling heights of his fortunes. His gigantic empire was still to expand; and he was to ally himself, with the old order of Europe, by a bond which, in his exulting hopes, was to make doubly sure the assurance of fate, yet was to prove a false and ensnaring pledge. Nemesis was waiting, in grim repose, for her victim; the Son of the Morning was ere long to fall.

CHAPTER X.

Divorce of Joséphine—Napoleon marries Marie Louise—Excesses of the Continental System—Quarrel of Napoleon with the Pope—The Council—Progress of the war in Spain—Campaign of Masséna in Portugal—Battle of Busaco—The Lines of Torres Vedras—Retreat of Masséna—Great ability shown by Wellington—Battle of Fuentes de Onoro—The Empire in 1810–1811—Its apparent grandeur and real instability—Birth of the King of Rome—Disputes with Russia—Immense preparations for war made by Napoleon—His reception in Dresden—Passage of the Niemen—The advance to Smolensk—Battle of Borodino—Napoleon enters Moscow—The retreat from Moscow—Passage of the Beresina—Horrors of the retreat—Ruin of the Grand Army—Reflections.

IN the spring of 1810 an event occurred which raised Napoleon to another height of grandeur, and seemed to give increased stability to his throne. The Empress Joséphine had borne him no offspring; and, though in spite of domestic scandals which had exasperated him after his return from Egypt, and of her extravagant and somewhat frivolous life, he had been an indulgent, nay, a kind husband—Napoleon, whatever

calumny has said, was generous, and even fond, as a head of a family—he had resolved for some time to part from her, in the hope of securing, by another marriage, an heir to himself, and to his gigantic empire. Negotiations were opened, with more than one Court, to obtain a wife for the Lord of the Continent; the Czar, if no longer the satellite of Tilsit, was willing to give the Emperor a youthful sister; but the prejudices of his mother and of the Russian *noblesse* prevented a union with a merely crowned soldier; Napoleon hastily withdrew his proposals; and ill-feeling once more embittered relations already becoming estranged, nay, hostile. Austria, though in truth only biding her time, in her present humbled and prostrate state, eagerly caught at overtures that promised a truce at least; and the representative of the German Cæsars gladly consented that a daughter of his house should become the bride of his all-powerful conqueror. The marriage with Joséphine was annulled, by one of the devices often employed by Rome to sanction questionable acts; and after exhibitions of passionate grief, with which Napoleon had unfeigned sympathy, the discarded Empress hid her sorrows in a retreat, which magnificence, and even affection, could not render happy.

The second nuptials were made an occasion for the display of the ceremonial of old Royal Europe. Berthier was sent to Vienna in great pomp to demand the hand of the child of the Hapsburgs; the marriage contract was drawn in the forms of that of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette; and the Arch-

duke Charles represented Napoleon at the solemnisation of the sacred rite. The bride was accompanied to France by a brilliant train of courtiers; she was received by Napoleon eagerly at Compiègne, and the marriage was celebrated again, in state, at the Tuileries. The Empress Marie Louise, raised thus to a throne which appeared the pinnacle of every earthly grandeur, proved herself to be, in the changes of fortune, no worthy descendant of Maria Theresa. She was intelligent, and had amiable qualities; but the woman who had lain by Napoleon's side, and had become the mother of his only son, ought not to have left him in the hour of disaster, to have shaken him off like an evil dream, to have been seen, with a smiling face, in the throng of his conquerors, to have dishonoured his name by an ignoble love. The fate of her fallen rival was very different; Joséphine died, "broken-hearted at the ruin of her Cid," amidst the crash of the perishing Empire.

The Peace of Vienna turned the attention of Napoleon once more to the Continental System, that perilous chimera of force and wrong. The attempt to crush British commerce, had hitherto met with little success; England, in command of every sea on the globe, had found markets of some importance in the great colonies which had followed the revolt of Spain; British merchandise made its way into the Continent, by a contraband trade,*

* Even Masséna, not to speak of other French generals, was guilty of this conduct. See *Mémoires de Général Marbot*, tome iii., 17.

through the fraudulent connivance of French officials, and through the efforts of merchants in every town; and hundreds of neutral vessels, with the consent of England carried British and colonial produce into many ports of Europe, its origin concealed in different ways. Napoleon redoubled his efforts to prevent this traffic; he employed tens of thousands of soldiers to watch the coasts, from Dantzig to Marseilles, and thence to Trieste; he confiscated and punished without stint or scruple; and he even entered into a quarrel with the United States—already indignant with both England and France for their absolute disregard of the rights of neutrals—because America resented the Continental System.

These measures undoubtedly distressed England; her paper circulation fell in value; her working-classes suffered cruelly; and though a flourishing agriculture and a gigantic commerce enabled her to resist the shock, many houses eminent in her trade fell. But, on the other hand, France and the States of the Continent were left without many of the necessaries of trade, and to a great extent of the conveniences of life; their manufactures were much injured; some of their centres of commerce were almost ruined, for free and general export had become impossible; and an immense rise in the price of all the products of India, and of every colonial settlement, provoked discontent in palace and cottage alike, through the Empire and its vassal dependencies. Napoleon toiled hard to lessen these dangers and evils; he established a system of trading licences,

which mitigated the Continental System, by permitting imports and exports to be made on the payment of a tax to the Treasury; he allowed colonial and even British merchandise to enter the Empire under heavy imposts. But these expedients brought no general relief; trade could not flourish under these restrictions; and the universal indignation was only quickened when it had become apparent that the Continental System was made a means to replenish the Imperial exchequer. Yet these were far from the worst results of an unnatural scheme, which, we have seen, directly tended to universal conquest. Holland owed her existence to foreign commerce; even Napoleon's brother Louis, the new king, evaded the tyranny of the Continental System; and for this, and other causes of complaint, the Conqueror suddenly deprived him of his throne, and declared the States a province of the all-encroaching Empire. Hanover, the Hanse Towns, and the Grand Duchy of Oldenburg were soon annexed, on the plea of excluding British commerce from the North German seaboard; and Sweden, and even the Czar, were plainly told that a rupture with France would be the consequence of baffling or eluding the Emperor's policy. The Empire was, in this way, extended along the coast, until, with the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, it drew dangerously near the frontier of Russia.

This extravagance of power was, at the same time, seen in another great, but very different, sphere. A dispute had been for some years growing between Napoleon and Pius VII.; and it broke out into an

angry quarrel, threatening Church and State throughout the French Empire. The Pope had expected to receive some of his lost provinces from the new Charlemagne; and when disappointed in a natural hope, he had crossed Napoleon in different ways. He had refused to annul the first marriage of Jerôme, and to sanction a Concordat in the kingdom of Italy; he had supported the fallen Bourbons of Naples; and he had opposed, on more than one occasion, the spiritual power of Rome, not extinct, even in an infidel age, to the colossal temporal power of a conqueror. Napoleon had, by this time, taken the Grand Duchy of Tuscany from the Infanta of Spain, discrowned like her ill-fated parents, and had conferred it on his sister Elisa, "the Semiramis of Lucca," as Talleyrand called her; and he soon marched an army into the Papal States, declared the throne of the Pontiff vacant, and annexed Rome and all his dominions to the Italian kingdom. Pius answered this violence by excommunication, and by the subtle but more potent expedient of refusing to institute to their offices the prelates nominated by the Emperor; and the aged priest was carried off to Savona, and, though treated with respect, was placed in captivity.

The Church was soon in disorder and trouble; a schism seemed, for a time, imminent; but, though religion cannot be said to have suffered, the organisation of the Church was impaired by the absence from their sees of a number of Bishops. The Emperor, though with little effect, attempted to remedy this state of things; he was baffled and thwarted by

moral influences not to be put down by material force; and he at last called a great Council of the Church, composed of prelates convened from all parts of the Empire, to make a settlement of ecclesiastical affairs. In absolute trust in his overwhelming power, he had hoped to attract Pius VII. to Paris, to induce him to consent that the Roman pontiffs, should be only first Bishops of the Lord of the West, and that spiritual supremacy as well as temporal should be concentrated in one autocrat's hands; and he wished the Council to examine the question. But the assembly visibly inclined to the Pope; and after long debates, in which the captivity of the head of the Church was sharply glanced at, by the tongues even of obsequious flatterers, it only consented to advise the Pope to fill the vacant sees in the interest of the faith. Pius VII. yielded, but with reluctance; he ultimately assented to the loss of his temporal power; but the project was never again advanced of placing Napoleon on the double throne of the Cæsars and of Gregory VII.

The war in the Iberian peninsula had, meanwhile, been going on with varying fortunes. Soult had been driven, we have seen, from the Douro, and had narrowly escaped a second Baylen; but Victor had entered Estremadura, and had routed the Spanish levies by the Guadiana. Wellesley had soon afterwards advanced in the valley of the Tagus, with a British army ill supported by a force of auxiliaries; he had defeated Victor and Jourdan in a hard-fought battle at Talavera, not far from Madrid; but a great French army, under Soult and Mortier, de-

scended on his flank, through the hills of Avila, and almost involved him in a real disaster. This peril warned the British commander—raised to the peerage by the revered name of Wellington—that operations in Spain were, as yet, premature; and he executed a preconceived design, which saved the peninsula from Napoleon's arms, and contributed largely to the Emperor's fall.

Deep thinking, and possessing all but perfect judgment, Wellington had, even before leaving England, perceived the difficulties that beset the French; and the power of the Spanish rising was not lost on him, though he knew how small was the worth of the Spanish troops. He thoroughly understood how the long line of the French communications, from Bayonne to Madrid, was always exposed to an attack from Portugal; like Marlborough he saw the immense value to England, of the command of the sea; and, above all, he had grasped the cardinal fact, that Napoleon's system of conducting war could hardly succeed in a poor country, and that his decisive movements were all but impossible amidst ranges and defiles, where masses of men could not find the means of living on the spot. Impressed with these truths, he had insisted that a British army, though not large in numbers, would be able, if backed by resources from home, and by auxiliary Portuguese levies, to maintain its ground against the French in Portugal; that it would find opportunities to assist the Spaniards, and even to fall, with effect, on their foes, exposed and scattered over whole provinces; and that it would always re-

tain the means of retreat; and he declared, with prophetic insight, that Napoleon would rue his effort to overrun the peninsula. The British government, though suffering from the defeat of Walcheren, and as yet with little belief in these views, allowed Wellington to take his own course; and that sagacious general proceeded to carry out a masterly plan of defence he had formed. He had already about thirty thousand British troops; he induced the men in power, for the time, in Portugal, to give him control over the Portuguese army; and he assembled an irregular force of levies able to make a stand behind works and entrenchments. Meanwhile, with remarkable secrecy and skill, he fortified a hilly neck of land between the ocean and the Tagus, in front of Lisbon; the art of the engineer gave the position prodigious strength, and in the Lines of Torres Vedras—a vast system of formidable defences held by a powerful force—he "deposited," as was eloquently said, "the independence of Portugal and even of Spain."

By the spring of 1810, the French armies in Spain numbered fully three hundred and fifty thousand men, and Napoleon had intended to cross the Pyrenees, at the head of this enormous force. His marriage, however, or more probably the innumerable toils and cares of Empire prevented him from carrying out his purpose; and this was one of the capital mistakes of his life, for his presence was necessary on the scene of events. He still despised the insurrection of Spain; he held Wellington cheap as a "Sepoy general"; strange as it may appear, he was wholly ignorant of the existence of the Lines of Torres Vedras,

and he persisted in maintaining that the only real enemy in the Peninsula was the British army, which he estimated at twenty-five thousand men. He gave Masséna seventy thousand men, with orders "to drive the English into the sea"; and, at the same time, he sent a great army to subdue Andalusia and the South, false to his art in thus dividing his forces.

A contest followed renowned in history, and big with memorable results for Europe. Messéna took the fortresses on the northeast of Portugal, and by the close of September had entered Beira; he met a bloody reverse at Busaco, but he succeeded in turning Wellington's flank, and he advanced, in high heart, from Coimbra, on Lisbon. To his amazement, however, the impregnable lines, a gigantic obstacle utterly unforeseen, rose before him, and brought the invaders to a stand, and the "spoiled child of victory," daring as he was, after vain efforts to find a vulnerable point, recoiled from before the invincible rampart, baffled and indignant, but as yet hopeful. Masséna, with admirable skill, now chose a formidable position near the Tagus, and held the British commander in check; he scoured the whole country around for supplies, and he sent pressing messages to his Imperial master, to inform him of the situation, and to ask for reinforcements. But Wellington, with wise, if stern, forethought, had wasted the adjoining region with fire and sword; Napoleon, meditating a new war, was unable to despatch a regiment from France; Soult, ordered to move from Andalusia to the aid of his colleague, paused, and hung back; and Masséna, his army lit-

erally starved out, and strengthened by a small detachment only, was at last reluctantly forced to retreat. The movement began in March, 1811; it was conducted with no ordinary skill; but Wellington had attained his object and the French general re-entered Spain with the wreck only of a once noble force. Masséna, however, would not confess defeat; having restored and largely increased his army, he attacked Wellington at Fuentes de Onoro, and possibly only missed a victory, owing to the jealousies of inferior men. This, nevertheless, was his last effort; he was superseded in his command by Napoleon, unjust in this instance to his best lieutenant, and Wellington's conduct of the war had been completely justified. Torres Vedras permanently arrested Napoleon's march of conquest; the French never entered Portugal again.

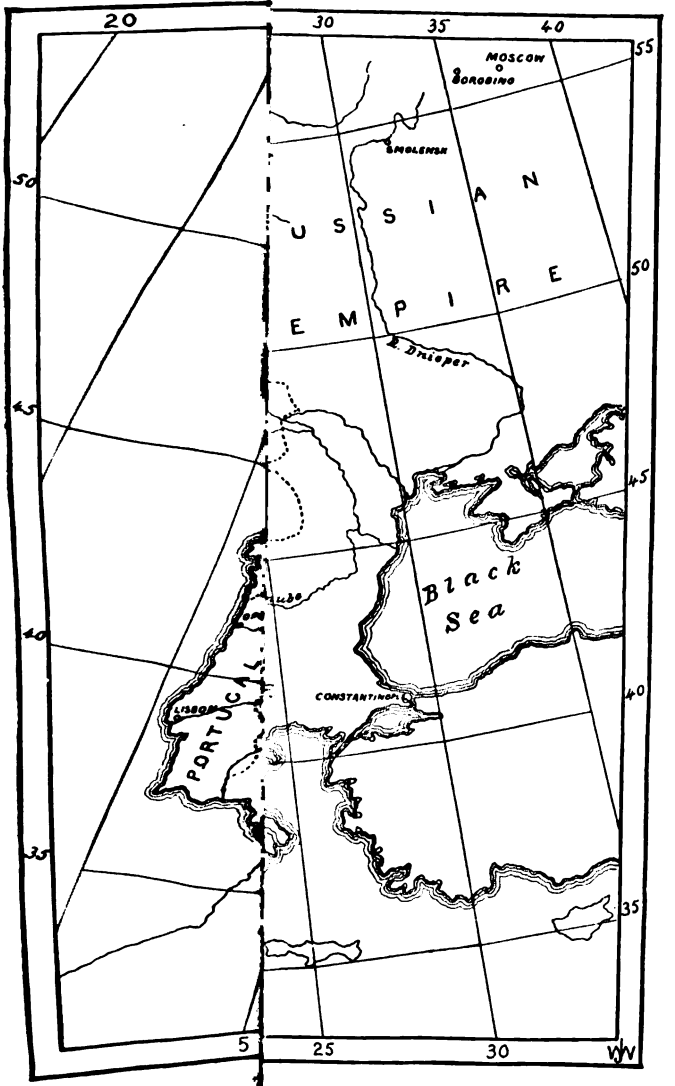
These events occurring in a nook of Portugal, scarcely attracted the attention of the world at first. But they made a deep impression on thoughtful minds: the British ministry, before doubting, but convinced by Wellington's wisdom and success, gave him a free hand, and large reinforcements; and England maintained the struggle with redoubled energy. Soldiers, too, had begun to study the strategy which had had such results at Torres Vedras; the weak point in the Napoleonic system of war—the vulnerable heel of Achilles—had been detected; and it was seen that a retreat before largely superior forces might lead to ultimate and great success, if the enemy was kept back by obstacles, and was prevented from living on the tracts

he entered. Meantime, the never-ceasing insurrection of Spain continued to waste the Imperial forces, and surrounded them, as it were, with a circle of fire. It was all in vain that another great army was struck down in the field at Ocana; that Suchet invaded and held Valencia; that Soult ravaged Andalusia; that Victor besieged Cadiz. The resistance of the nation became more intense than ever; Saguntum, which had defied Hannibal, Girona, Tortosa, and, above all, Tarragona defended their walls to the last; and not a village from Asturias to Granada acknowledged Joseph, at Madrid, as its lawful king. Besides, the war in the Peninsula had been ill conducted; Napoleon, in his contempt of his enemy, had scattered and divided his forces; he had fallen into the dangerous error of directing operations far away from Paris; his armies could hardly unite from want of supplies; and especially his lieutenants did not support each other, and were separated by jealousies and conflicting interests. Two soldiers, notably, of very different natures, Blücher, overcome in 1806, but thirsting for revenge, and Wellington, more than ever confident, saw in Spain and Portugal a certain presage of evils gathering round the Imperial conqueror.

To ordinary observers, however, the distant clouds that were to burst in storm were as yet scarcely visible; and the Empire seemed at the height of its power. We may glance for a moment at this colossal structure of revolutionary and all-engrossing conquest. France had overpassed her "natural boundaries," the Ocean, the Alps, the Pyrenees, the

Rhine; her kingdom of Italy, stretched from the Roya to the Tiber and the Adriatic shores, comprised Dalmatia, and reached the valley of the Save, known as the Illyrian Provinces, lately annexed; and, to the north, her frontiers included Holland, and extended to the verge of the Baltic. Yet this immense territory was but the centre of a domination which bestrode the Continent. The Kingdom of Naples, under Murat, and that of Westphalia, under Jerôme, were French provinces in all but name; Central Germany and its vassal princes were mere dependencies of the Empire; the supremacy of France was carried beyond the Vistula, by the creation of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw; and Joseph Bonaparte was maintained by force at Madrid, on the throne of Spain and the Indies. The giant empire, too, which towered over every state in the mainland of Europe, was upheld by military force unequalled in extent. Napoleon had nine hundred thousand men in arms; his legions had struck down the Leagues of old Europe in a succession of rapid and glorious victories; and, if England remained the mistress of the seas, he was steadily gathering naval resources together, was constructing fleets and collecting seamen, to enable him, as he hoped, to avenge Trafalgar.

Moreover, except at a few points, this great fabric of triumphant force was magnificent in its external aspect. Paris, the chief seat of the conqueror's rule, had assumed the look of the Rome of the Cæsars, had gathered into her lap the spoils of Europe, and year after year was being decked with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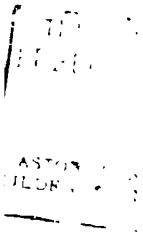

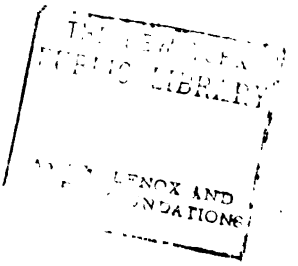
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new ornaments of beauty and grandeur. The cannon-moulded Column of Austerlitz rose; the Madeleine was begun as a Temple for the Grand Army; the foundations of the Arch of the Star had been laid, and of the Arch bearing the Lion of St. Mark; and the Seine had been spanned by the bridge of Jena, and by similar constructions that told of conquest. The same sights were seen in other cities of France; fine public buildings, too, had risen in Milan, and in some of the chief towns of Italy; Antwerp had expanded into a great arsenal; and large sums had been spent in improving Mayence, Cologne, Wesel, Strasburg, and other strong places. The great national works of the Consulate, also, had by this time been almost completed; the barriers of the Alps had fallen, overcome by admirable and broad highways; the rivers of France and of her new provinces had been linked with each other, and with the sea, by a noble and prosperous system of canals; new roads stretched through the length and breadth of the Empire; and Napoleon had toiled incessantly to make Cherbourg one of the finest creations of the fallen monarchy, a rival of Portsmouth across the Channel.

The Empire, too, still appeared settled on a permanent and even assured basis. Napoleon was in the first prime of manhood, and he often expressed a belief that he "would reign thirty years," to consolidate, and extend the structure he had raised. A son, besides, had just been born to him; and the title of King of Rome, conferred on the infant,

seemed a pledge of the fortunes of the Imperial heir, and of the duration of the conqueror's dynasty. Nor was the Empire a scheme of mere absolute power, maintaining itself by force only. Napoleon himself was a crowned Dictator; but, within the bounds of old and of parts of new France, a shadow of national sovereignty remained in the neglected Constitution of the year VIII., and in the Senate, and the Legislature lately given free speech; these Bodies had still, in name, a right to enact laws and to impose taxes; and in a time of peace, and under a different ruler, they might by degrees have developed liberty. The government, too, continued to secure the great interests which the Revolution had formed; millions of peasants felt no fear for their lands, emancipated from harsh feudal bondage; the powerful middle class, which had risen since 1789, was confirmed in its position in the State; and, above all, the destruction of exclusive privilege, and the tendency to a broad social equality, which had been the main results of the revolt from the past, were permanently and completely assured. As for the Republican parties of former days, they had dwindled into a few obscure names; the Terrorists had long shrunk out of sight; and the disappearance of the Republican calendar had effaced the last visible sign of the ideas of 1793.

The institutions of the Consulate and of the Empire, too, seemed flourishing, and settled on a firm basis; the Concordat had not been shaken by the dispute with the Pope; the Church of France obeyed Cæsar, and upheld the Faith; the Code

Napoleon was administered by the reformed tribunals, and proved an admirable rule of justice and right; education was diffused in hundreds of schools; and even the finances, though suffering from the Continental System, and propped up by unwise expedients, at least wore a prosperous look. Material grandeur, order, and obedience prevailed, as a general rule, in the France of the Empire; and a creation, formed of late by Napoleon, was deemed by him a new means to support the fabric. He had long surrounded his throne with the old *noblesse*, recalled from exile, and even highly favoured; the Rohans, the Mortemarts, the De Noailles, the Narbonnes, were the most brilliant ornaments of the Imperial Court; and, as we have seen, he had raised Talleyrand and Bernadotte to the rank of Princes. Napoleon had carried out a design of calling into being a second *noblesse* of the new era, of making it the aristocracy of Imperial France, and of blending it ultimately with the nobles of the past; and this order, he hoped, would be a mainstay of his dynasty, and would add to its splendour. The institution had characteristics of a significant kind; owing to the hatred of Feudalism, still felt in France, the chief titles contained in the new peerage were wholly derived from foreign lands; and they were usually accompanied with large endowments, drawn from royal domains, changed into fiefs, in Italy, in Germany, and even in Poland, or from the revenues of conquered provinces. The leaders of the armies had been fitly made the most numerous pillars of a monarchy of the sword; Masséna was Duke of

Rivoli and Prince of Essling, Davoust Duke of Auerstadt and Prince of Eckmühl, Berthier Prince of Neuchatel and Prince of Wagram; and the Dukedoms of Dalmatia, of Elchingen, of Castiglione, of Istria, of Belluno, of Friuli, and several others, were bestowed on great soldiers of the Revolution, and on the chief companions-in-arms of the Emperor. Eminence in the service of the State, in civil affairs, was however rewarded with like distinctions; Cambacérès and Lebrun had been made Princes; the Dukedoms of Vicenza, of Cadore, of Bassano, were given in recognition of diplomatic merit; Guadin was made Duke of Gaeta for his financial skill, Regnier Duke of Massa, as Head of the Law, and Fouché Duke of Otranto, as Head of the Police. A crowd of counts and barons filled the lower ranks of a nobility which was held out to France as the complement of the Legion of Honour.

Nor was the Empire in foreign lands the mere tyranny of conquest, and an unmixed evil. Italy, still a separate kingdom in name, had increased rapidly in wealth and prosperity. Genoa and Venice became great ports of construction; and the Peninsula was enriched by its commerce with France. Even the vassal States of the Confederation of the Rhine, drew advantages from Imperial rule; in some of the inland towns manufactures improved; and industry made strides in many provinces. This material good, moreover, was small compared to the great social and popular benefits undoubtedly conferred by French supremacy. The institutions of the Revolution and of the Empire

had been planted in most of the lands, subject to Napoleon's control and influence; the Code brought with it a just system of law; the iniquities of privilege almost disappeared, the domination of the Church was curtailed; society was established on the basis of equal rights, without impassable differences of class; even the system of recruiting military force, if more onerous, in fact, than it had ever been, was in principle fairer and less severe. The chief, however, of these advantages was the abolition of Feudalism, and of all that resulted from it. The extinction of the old German Empire put an end to a multitude of restrictions that injured agriculture and impeded commerce; and the diffusion of the laws and of the ideas of France set the soil free, tended to increase wealth, and raised the peasantry everywhere to a better state of existence. The despotism, in a word, of Napoleon produced effects beyond the Rhine and the Alps very similar to those produced in France by the despotism of Richelieu and of Louis XIV. It was levelling and oppressive, but it swept away abuses; it placed the humbler orders of men on a higher level; it, in some measure, improved humanity. And, for this reason, the name of the Conqueror is still held in reverence in the very lands, once trodden down by the feet of his many legions; his sword nations have felt was a tremendous scourge, but it was an instrument, too, of civilising power.

The Empire, nevertheless, was undermined; and the huge structure was already in decay. The prosperity of the Consulate was a thing of the past;

and the material resources of France were being greatly diminished. Her maritime cities were almost ruined; grass grew in the streets of Marseilles and Bordeaux; and her industry was sapped by the Continental System. Even the magnificence of the capital and of the great towns was mainly upheld by the spoils of war; and the national wealth depended largely on a conqueror's sword. The military strength of France, too, the only real support of her power, had been for a considerable time in decline; the soldiers of Austerlitz were perishing in Spain; and the armies were being more and more composed of young levies and of lukewarm auxiliaries. And if Napoleon's empire was, at best, a precarious creation, when first founded, how could it endure beyond his life, when it spread its arms almost to the Niemen; and if it collapsed, was it not probable that the institutions of the Consular era, nay, the order of things ever since established, would vanish in the chaos of a new Revolution? The birth of a son to Napoleon, it deserves notice, was received at this time in France with indifference; it did not seem to the national mind to add to the strength of the Imperial throne. His despotism, too, had undergone a great change, of late years, for the worse; the Senate and Legislature had become a mere herd of flatterers, to register his edicts, and to carry out his mandates; the administration of justice had been much injured by special tribunals, and by the weakening of judicial independence, under various pretexts; the finances were upheld partly by the exactions of war, partly by

new and oppressive taxes, and, to a great extent, by illegitimate means; and, above all, ministers who in any way crossed the will of an imperious master were summarily removed from the very highest offices. Talleyrand had fallen and, also, Fouché, the one usually a prudent counsellor, the other a bad intriguer, but astute and cautious; the foreign policy of the Empire had become more extravagant, and the system of delation, and of keeping opinion down—the certain signs of despotic power—had been made more than ever odious.

Yet the worst symptom, perhaps, of peril at hand was the attitude to the Empire of large parts of the people. Discontent and passion were widely seething beneath a surface of order and repose; Napoleon had ceased to be even popular, and was denounced by whole classes as a harsh tyrant; the devouring waste of the war in Spain carried desolation into thousands of hearths; opposition to the imposts was growing; the Conscription was cursed as a tax of blood; and many youths wounded themselves, and fled from their houses, to avoid "going," as it was said, "to the shambles." In this condition of things, it is needless to say, the new *noblesse* could not strengthen their master, and in fact they were a mere throng of functionaries, with high-sounding names, but without a single quality of a really noble order.

Nor could the benefits of Napoleon's rule console nations for the many evils and humiliations it brought in its train. Man does not live upon bread alone;

the yoke of France was lighter than that of Austria, and might even be deemed an ornament; but Italy had not forgotten her hopes of liberty; and gilded as it was, she remained in bondage. As for Germany, the conqueror's vassal princes still licked his hand, and received his largesses; but she chafed in indignation in her French chains; and the movement by which she had been, for some time, stirred, was, though beneath the surface as yet, becoming by degrees a mighty effort to attain independence and national unity. Meanwhile, Prussia was secretly arming, deceiving her oppressor by the arts of the weak; even Wagram had only made her more cautious; and she was preparing herself for a great part she was to play in a not distant future. If French supremacy, too, effected reforms attended with real and lasting good, this was more than effaced by the innumerable wrongs, iniquities, and miseries caused by it. The law of the conscription was more just than the old German laws of service in war; but in a single year it forced into the ranks of the armies of a foreign dominant race, more youths than hitherto had been forced in twenty. Social improvements were, in themselves, excellent; but what were they compared to the evils of provinces robbed by French officials, of cruel exactions reduced to a system, of the insolence of alien and hated conquerors? Nothing, besides, could compensate for the hardships and ill-will due to the Continental System; the Hanse Towns and the cities of Holland had become centres of distress and bankruptcy, and from the Rhine to the Vistula all classes were harassed and

impoverished by this scheme of injustice. And if the Empire within and beyond France was being thus weakened in all its parts, what was the position as regards Europe, of that edifice raised by conquest alone in defiance of the nature of things, and of the order of the world for centuries? It was encompassed on every side by enemies, vanquished, but watching an opportunity to strike; Austria might seem friendly, Prussia submissive, Russia bound by the policy of Tilsit; but they could not endure the existing state of things; deeds, such as the execution of the Duc d'Enghien, the invasion of Spain, the annexation of Holland, the creation of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, kept their leading men in continual fear; and the domination of Napoleon always tended to second the baffled, but powerful, Leagues of the Continent. And outside these Powers, we repeat, was England, triumphant and secure in her island fortress, invincible, and growing in strength and wealth, despite a year or two of passing distress, already, since recent events in Spain, looked up to as the rising hope of mankind, steady in her resistance to her implacable foe, and eager to form and to support alliances against France and her menacing Empire. And Napoleon's power, we repeat also, was a mere despotism of the sword, founded on success, and depending on a people proud of its renown, but passionate, unstable, and prone to change; content to submit for years to a master, and then ready suddenly to rise up against him,—above all a people, deeply corrupted by a Revolution most injurious to the national character.

Another ominous sign of the time was an apparent decline in French intellect. The Empire boasted great names in Science; and it had representatives in the domain of Art, of merit, if not of peculiar excellence. But if we except Napoleon himself, a master of thought, expressed in almost perfect language, no great philosopher, and no great men of letters, emerged in the generation that had grown up when the Revolution began its course. The causes of this were, no doubt, general; an age of national discord and trouble was unfavourable to reflection, and to the cultivation of the mind; and the intellectual strength of France had been largely directed to the military art, and the pursuits of the camp. But Napoleon had much to do with this dearth; he was the mould of opinion in France for years; his powerful understanding and keen sense revolted from the speculations, the shallow theories, the flippant literature of the eighteenth century; he had seen what evils had flowed from them; he scoffed at the philosophy of the day as "ideology," pernicious, barren, and mischievous to the State; and he had no faith in its historical research, or in its achievements in the sphere of letters. These views, often expressed, had a great effect; Napoleon, too, had the despot's dislike of all that deals with man on his moral side, or with the free growth of human ideas; and the whole system of education formed by him discouraged studies of nearly every kind except "mathematics," for him, "the Queen of Sciences." The Empire had no Descartes, Malebranche, or Bossuet; Napoleon "longed for a Cor-

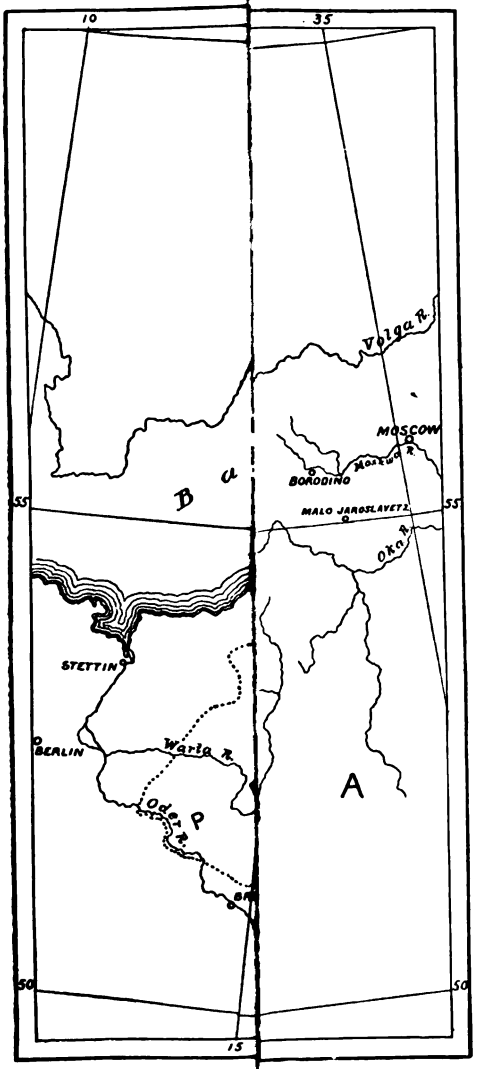
neille, to make him a Prince"; and the glory shed on the throne of Louis XIV. by literature and thought of the highest excellence, was wanting to the reign of his mighty successor.

It deserves notice, too, that a young generation of men of letters and of philosophic tastes had begun to make its influence felt; and this was bitterly hostile to the Imperial autocrat, who discouraged it by all means in his power. The manners and fashions of the Empire, also, are perhaps worthy of passing notice. There was a gorgeous show of military splendour and of magnificence of every kind; the banquets and festivals at the Tuileries exhibited a pomp never witnessed before; and the high life of Paris imitated the ways of a stately, lavish, and luxurious Court, strict in its ceremonial and its well-ordered display. But the charm and grace of Versailles were wanting; the awkwardness and rudeness of the new *noblesse* were ridiculed by the survivors of the old, too few to make their influence felt; the bearing of Napoleon was very different from the perfect urbanity of the great King; there was something tawdry and vulgar in the grandeur around. The tendencies of society, in all its grades, were those of a revolutionary age; there was a feverish eagerness to amass riches; morality was at the lowest ebb; there was little principle or public virtue; and the general idea was to live from hand to mouth, ostentatiously, and without a thought of the morrow.

The quarrel with Russia, impending for years, by this time had become imminent. The sworn friends

of Tilsit had been long estranged; and their feelings and interests had come into conflict. Napoleon complained of what he called the bad faith of the Czar, in 1809; and he was indignant that his ally would not carry out the Continental System, to its extreme limits. Alexander secretly resented the slight cast on his sister; was more than ever alarmed at the Saxon Poland, especially since he had tried in vain to induce Napoleon to sign a treaty, that the Poles in no event should be made a nation; and denounced the late annexations to the Empire, and notably that of the Grand Duchy of Oldenburg, the patrimony of a near kinsman. The party hostile to the French alliance, besides, had become ascendent at St. Petersburg; and the Russian aristocracy, nay the people, had cruelly suffered from the war with England, and from an immense diminution of Russian commerce. Napoleon had resolved to invade Russia, as early as the spring of 1811; this had been the chief reason that he had been unable to reinforce Masséna from France; and neglecting the ruinous war in Spain, he determined to attack the great Power of the North, here again false to his distinctive strategy.

The preparations for the enterprise surpassed all that he had conceived or attempted before, and once more illustrated his organising powers and his extraordinary art of stratagem. He had learned from the experience of 1807, how Herculean were the labours before him; yet he addressed himself to the task with the most perfect confidence. Aware that his troops would have to move through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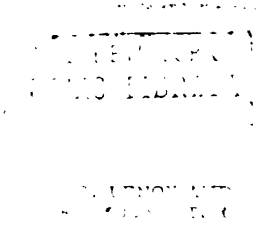

barren regions where they could not find supplies, he gradually formed immense magazines, in the tracts between the Elbe and the Vistula; all the resources needed to support armies were slowly transported towards the Russian frontier, by an admirable system of water-carriage; and waggons and carts were built in thousands to convey the food required for a gigantic host. Meanwhile the fortresses on the lines of march were strongly occupied and placed in readiness; and Davoust was sent forward with a powerful force to make all necessary arrangements, and to observe the enemy. Orders, too, were secretly despatched to Murat and Jerôme, and to Eugene Beauharnais, to collect their forces; the Confederates of the Rhine were told to prepare their contingents; another conscription was levied in France; thousands of men were summoned from the contest in Spain, where Joseph had been named commander-in-chief, and made responsible for all that might occur; immense bodies of troops were arrayed on the Rhine; and the military strength of Western Europe was combined for a crusade to the East.

The great movement, however, was skilfully masked by every expedient that could be devised; the Czar was kept in uncertainty by diplomatic feints; and the gathering arrays did not begin their march until the spring of 1812, Napoleon's purpose being to deceive his adversary, as to his intentions, until the last moment, and when the plains of Poland could yield herbage sufficient for his myriads of horses, to advance rapidly across the Niemen.

Austria and Prussia, when all was nearly ready, were invited, or forced, to send contingents to the colossal hosts of the Lord of the West, who at this conjuncture had at his disposition eleven hundred thousand men in arms, a number that might be well deemed fabulous.

As in 1807, the preparations of the Czar fell far short of those of Napoleon. He clung to the hope of peace, until it was almost too late; he was perhaps misled by his enemy's wiles; and, as he had invaded Turkey some months before, in order to conquer the Danubian Provinces, he had a large force engaged in the South of the Empire. By the spring of 1812 he had only assembled about two hundred and fifty thousand men, in Lithuanian Poland, behind the Niemen; he seems to have formed no settled projects; and, as had been the case with Prussia before Jena, this force was dangerously thrown forward, and exposed to attack. Napoleon left Paris in May, 1812, accompanied by the young Empress, to control and direct the mighty enterprise; and all that he saw and heard might have led him to pause. He passed through the capital almost in silence; France was murmuring as he beheld her provinces; even his docile marshals dreaded the contest; his troops up to the Rhine were, for the most part, boys; beyond the Rhine, they were half despised auxiliaries.

Yet he saw a different sight when he reached Dresden; once more, and for the last time, the vanquished Continent bowed to its Lord; the Head of the Hapsburgs led the train; the humbled King of Prussia was present; and princes and nobles from

many lands flocked to do homage to their mighty Paramount. After a few days passed in brilliant festivities, at which queens waited on Marie Louise, and crowned heads attended the Conqueror's bidding, Napoleon set off to join his armies; and lordly flatterers cried out with one voice that Alexander was a fool to resist, and that the war would be an excursion of summer. The Emperor was near the Niemen by the third week of June; and by this time the huge first line of the Grand Army, given the name again, arrayed in the magnificence of war, equipped for long marches and a difficult campaign, and followed by *impedimenta* on a prodigious scale, had drawn, unmolested, towards the Russian frontier. It numbered about four hundred and twenty thousand men, including seventy thousand horsemen and one thousand guns; the masses were divided into nine *corps d'armée*, with two corps in reserve behind; and reckoning the Prussian and Austrian forces, it spread from near the sea to the verge of Galicia. The sight might have turned Napoleon's head; and yet it presented ominous signs. In that enormous assemblage of many races, the good French troops were comparatively few; and nearly two-thirds of the host probably were composed of weak conscripts, of unwilling allies, and, as in the case of the Prussians, of concealed enemies. Companions in arms of Napoleon's, too, were absent, whose absence suggested grave thoughts; Masséna, the chief of the marshals, was in disgrace; and Bernadotte, made heir to the crown of Sweden, was meditating defection and treason.

On the 24th of June, 1812, Napoleon crossed the Niemen, at the point where Kowno projects, like an angle, into the Lithuanian plains. Far to the left were the Prussians, under Macdonald, far to the right, the Austrians, led by Schwartzenberg; and the intermediate masses, along the immense line, had Oudinot, Ney, Davoust, Murat, Eugene, Poniatowski, and Jerôme, as their chiefs. The object of the Emperor was to advance from Kowno, as if from a salient, into old Poland, and to cut off the two Russian armies of Barclay de Tolly and Bagration, which separated from each other, at wide distances, were falling back towards the Dwina and Dnieper. This was in accord with his accustomed strategy; but the Grand Army did not carry out his conception. The troops, delayed by *impedimenta*, and thousands of carriages, were unable to move quickly through vast tracts without roads; they were already suffering from disease and privations; and the scenes of Pultusk reappeared in midsummer. Napoleon reached Wilna in a few days; and the phantom of Poland rose again before him, in the ancient chief town of Lithuania. A National Diet had been assembled; but he repeated the temporising conduct of 1807; he asked for levies, spoke fair words, and set up a kind of municipal government, in order chiefly to provide for his armies; but he would not speak the magic word "liberty"; and, indeed, he announced that this was not his policy.*

* The real sentiments of Napoleon, as regards Poland, appear in this significant phrase: "Je suis très loin de vouloir être le Don Quichotte de la Pologne."—*Correspondance*, tome xxii., 17.

He halted at Wilna for a considerable time, having blighted the hopes of the ardent Poles, who thenceforward looked coldly on the French; and, meanwhile, Davoust and Jerôme on the right had completely failed to strike down Bagration, and the first great operation of the war had been frustrated. This discomfiture was in part due to disputes between the young King of Westphalia, raised to high command by dynastic favour, and the veteran and experienced marshal; but largely too, to the state of their troops; and the Russian general made good his retreat by Nesvij and Mohilew, to the Dnieper. The Emperor broke up from Wilna in the middle of July, in the hope of reaching and overwhelming Barclay, who, directed by a pedantic theorist, had been ordered to defend a great entrenched camp, near Drissa, upon the middle Dwina; and had Barclay adopted this course, in a false imitation of Torres Vedras, he probably would have been surrounded and enclosed, and Europe have witnessed another Friedland. But the Russian chief, a very able man, escaped from the ensnaring shackles; and he marched behind the Dwina to Witepsk, seeking to join hands with his still distant colleague. Napoleon pursued, but the pursuit was fruitless; the Grand Army could not second his efforts; he was compelled to make another long halt at Witepsk; and he was there informed of the appalling fact, that of the four hundred and twenty thousand men of the invading host, one hundred and fifty thousand were missing, killed by sickness and want, deserters or stragglers, though

a few skirmishes only had, as yet, been fought. The conqueror, however, still advanced; he was at Smolensk, the "sacred gate of Muscovy," with part of his army on the 17th of August; a bloody and indecisive battle followed; and the French found the town a heap of charred ruins. Meanwhile Barclay and Bagration had effected their junction, had passed between the heads of the Dwina and Dnieper, and had penetrated into the immense interior.

Napoleon was now on the verge of old Russia; his operations had been admirably designed; but the condition of his army, nay Nature herself, had prevented their being accomplished with success. His lieutenants urged him to remain at Smolensk, to place his army in winter quarters, and, extending his wings on either side, to occupy the adjoining provinces; and obviously these were the counsels of prudence. But there were military reasons against this course; the great tempter of fortune was convinced that peace awaited him at Moscow, comparatively near; and a battle at Valoutina, in which the French only missed by accident a real victory, confirmed him in his purpose to advance. Yet, as usual, he took the most careful precautions to protect his communications, his flanks and his rear; for, we repeat, Napoleon was, as a rule, as methodical in war as he was grand in conception.

His position, at this juncture, appeared secure. Macdonald held Courland to the left, and Oudinot kept the Russian Wittgenstein in check; and Schwartzenberg had defeated Tormazoff, who had marched from the Pruth, with part of the army of

the South. Yet the conqueror would make assurance doubly sure; he directed Victor to approach Smolensk; he ordered Augereau to march towards the Niemen—these were the two corps of the immediate reserves—; he moved levies forward from the Elbe to the Oder; and he gave reiterated commands that immense magazines should be formed at Smolensk, Wilna, and along the lines of march. He left Smolensk, in the last week of August, at the head of about one hundred and sixty thousand men, the best part of the Grand Army; the troops had been largely provided with supplies; and for some days the invading host moved without delays along the broad watershed of the streams flowing to the Baltic, the Black Sea, and the Caspian.

The Russians, however, after the example of Wellington, wasted and harried the regions they passed through; and desertion and straggling so weakened the French, that the Emperor thought, for a moment, of retracing his steps. Intelligence reached him, nevertheless, which induced him to proceed on his march. The Russian army had chafed furiously at what seemed an interminable and timid retreat; the Czar had been obliged to replace Barclay, the author of this judicious strategy, by Kutusoff, the veteran of 1805; and the old chief, in order to please his troops, had promised them to stand, and to offer battle. The encounter took place on the 7th of September, in the tract round the village of Borodino; and it was the most sanguinary of an age of incessant war. The armies were each about one hundred and forty thousand

strong; but Kutusoff had weakened and exposed his left wing, and had crowded his right with useless masses; and the French gained a marked ascendency from the first, though the position of the Russians had been strengthened by a formidable array of field-works and entrenchments. Napoleon, however, was not well; he refused to engage the Guard in attacks, which probably would have been decisive; the Russians, if undoubtedly worsted, drew off from the field in good order; and the battle ended in a long artillery contest, in which Kutusoff's masses suffered terribly. The losses of the French were about thirty thousand men; those of the defeated army nearly fifty thousand; but Kutusoff's forces were not destroyed, and Borodino was only a greater Eylau.

The Emperor did not give proof on this great occasion of his wonted activity and skill on the field; this may have been the effect of illness; but he had declared that he would not imperil his best reserve when hundreds of miles away from the Niemen; and if this admission accounts for his conduct it also condemns his whole enterprise. The Russians however, were for the time paralysed; and on the 14th of September, 1812, the Grand Army had entered Moscow, the furthest limit of the march of the Tricolor, the extreme range of the flight of the eagles. Napoleon confidently thought that peace was certain; but in a few hours the City, self-destroyed, was engulphed in an appalling tempest of fire; and this might have warned the conqueror that there was no prospect of a repetition of Friedland

and Tilsit. Yet he nursed this illusion for a considerable time; he addressed flattering letters to the Czar; he sleeked the pride of his troops in splendid reviews; and unquestionably he was deceived by Kutusoff, who had fallen back from Moscow and held positions on the flank of the Grand Army, at no great distance, into a belief that Alexander was eager to treat.

Weeks passed in this way, until at last the prolonged silence of the Russian sovereign, the rapid decline of the French in strength, caused by exhaustion, disease, and death, and the large reinforcements, which flowed in to Kutusoff, removed the scales from Napoleon's eyes; and, after endeavouring in vain to persuade his marshals to attempt a great movement towards St. Petersburg, he reluctantly gave orders to retreat. The movement began on the 19th of October; and the Grand Army presented an ominous spectacle. It was still fully one hundred thousand strong; but it was burdened with the spoils of a great city; and it was so weak in horsemen, and so encumbered with guns and *impedimenta* of every kind, that it moved with extreme slowness, and could hardly manœuvre. Napoleon endeavoured to make for Kalouga, a fertile province not yet ravaged; but he recoiled, baffled, at Malo Jaroslavetz; he gave up a project that appeared hopeful; and he resolved to retreat by the direct way to Smolensk, on the lines on which he had advanced to Moscow. The Grand Army was now forced back, into regions turned into a barren wilderness; the necessary supplies, ere long, failed; famine fell on the rapidly

perishing host; and its destruction was quickened by the sudden advent of winter. Horses died in heaps, and men sank down in thousands; Kutusoff hung on the flank and rear of columns becoming helpless and hopeless multitudes; the Cossack light horsemen preyed on the wrecks of an army scarcely able to resist; and whole bodies of the invaders threw down their arms. Smolensk was reached in the second week of November; but scarcely more than forty thousand fugitives, confused masses, without military worth, were the only remains of the army of Moscow. All discipline and order, too, had been lost; and the great magazines which had been formed at the place, were sacked and pillaged by the half frantic soldiery.

Napoleon had hoped to find a haven at Smolensk where he could restore and increase his ruined army. But he had been lately informed of events which forced him to continue the retreat at once. The Czar had made peace with England and the Porte; Tchitchakoff, a Russian admiral, had advanced from the South, at the head of about fifty thousand men, had eluded Schwartzenberg, and had entered Volhynia; Wittgenstein had borne Oudinot back, with a superior force; and Victor, who had made his way to Smolensk, had been compelled hastily to leave the place, and to fly to the aid of his brother marshal. To the left and right, therefore, a great tempest of war was gathering on the flanks and rear of Napoleon; and he had no choice but to leave Smolensk. The retreating army had been reinforced; but it had been separated into many parts; the scenes of

the previous march were repeated; and it was soon once more a mere fugitive horde, breaking up and strewing its path with the dead and the dying. Kutusoff followed with his swarms of Cossacks; but the pursuit was feeble and ill directed; and the heroism of Ney, who covered the retreat, was the one gleam of light on a succession of horrors.

Towards the close of November, the invading army, reduced to a few thousand men, learned with terror that Tchitchakoff and Wittgenstein had drawn towards each other, on the Beresina; that Oudinot and Victor had fallen back; and that the retreat was barred by converging enemies, uniting on a scarcely passable river. Napoleon had not been himself since he had left Moscow, perhaps owing to illness, but, more probably, because, in the extreme of adversity, this great warrior did not possess the invincible resolution of Turenne or Frederick; but his genius suddenly shone out again, and he extricated his army from desperate straits, with a skill worthy of the chief of Arcola. Deceiving his enemy with admirable art, he threw two bridges over the Beresina, at a ford; Oudinot and Victor repelled the attacks of the baffled and divided Russian commanders, and the passage was effected, though thousands of men were lost and a whole host of stragglers was cut off. The united French forces were still perhaps from forty to fifty thousand strong; but they soon yielded to famine and cold, and before many marches were over, they were not twenty thousand.* Napoleon

* The state of the French army is thus described by Napoleon at this juncture. "Le froid et les privations ont débandé cette armée.

left the remains of his troops at Smorgoni, on the plea that his presence in France was necessary; considerable reinforcements came up from Wilna; but these were involved in the common ruin; and the young auxiliaries, of which they were chiefly formed, almost disappeared in a few days. Murat, who had been left in chief command, lost heart and fled in despair from Wilna; the magazines of that place were plundered, a second instance of self-destroying frenzy, and the wreck of the Grand Army, deserted by its chief, reached the Niemen in little knots and bands of gaunt spectres, which had lost the look of soldiers. Such an awful destruction had not been seen in war since the host of the Assyrian had been made "dead corpses," smitten by the hand of the avenging angel. Half a million of men, including reserves, had crossed the frontier of Russia a few months before, and probably not eighty thousand of these ever fought under the eagles again.

The causes of this tremendous ruin—the prelude to the fall of the French Empire—deserve the notice of impartial history.* Napoleon made several military mistakes; he ought not, perhaps, to have advanced from Smolensk; he was certainly inactive at Borodino; he stayed far too long a time at Moscow; he was remiss during the greater part of the retreat; and he ought not to have left his troops at Smorgoni.

Nous serons sur Vilna; pourrons nous y tenir? . . . Des vivres, des vivres, des vivres! Sans cela il n'y a pas d'horreurs aux quelles cette masse indisciplinée ne se porte contre cette ville."—*Correspondance*, tome xxiv., 322.

* An exceedingly able criticism of the campaign of 1812, will be found in the third volume of Wellington's *Supplementary Despatches.*

But these were not the paramount causes; and we may disregard the plea that it was "all the cold," for the Russians suffered even more than the French from this; and certainly Napoleon is not justified in his assertion that "but for the burning of Moscow he would have emerged like a ship from the ice in the spring," for the army could not have held the city for months. The disaster may be ascribed to two main facts: the Grand Army was a bad army, composed of untrustworthy and weak elements; it failed even at the outset of the campaign; and it could not accomplish Napoleon's designs. Had the Emperor commanded the troops of Austerlitz, he might have crushed Barclay and Bagration in July, and the troops of Austerlitz would not have perished and deserted in thousands in a few weeks. Again, Napoleon's system of war was almost impracticable in the wilds of Russia; as in 1807, his brilliant manœuvres—and they were admirable in conception at least—could not be carried out, with the celerity required, because his soldiers could not live on the spot, and had no good and durable highways; and the great moveable magazines he took care to prepare, which made his *impedimenta* enormous, attested even beforehand, this truth. The whole enterprise, it should be added, was probably beyond the power of man, in the known conditions of war at the time; the extravagance of Napoleon, in the domain of politics, appeared in the domain of his peculiar art, as was seen in the latter part of his career; and the General of 1796 never gave proof of the arrogance and imaginative excess of 1812.

As for the Russian commanders, Kutusoff was a national hero for many years, but his operations were weak and imperfect; the same may be said of most of his colleagues; if Wellington's strategy was a model for them, the imitation was not skilful, even if in their country it had great results; and Barclay alone deserves high praise. The tenacity and patriotism of Russia were most admirable; here again Napoleon, as in Spain, was beset by forces he unwisely scorned; and these contributed, too, to his overthrow. Two circumstances, perhaps, require special attention: the conqueror might have disarmed the Czar, on the frontier, had he set the Poles free; and probably he would have saved his army, had he followed the advice of more than one of his marshals, and proclaimed the liberation of the serfs of Russia at Moscow. In this, however, as in ever, instance, he remained true to his despotic instincts; and rather than let popular passions loose, he accepted the extreme perils of war. Undoubtedly the disaster of 1812 led, in a short time, to the fall of Napoleon, but had the catastrophe never occurred, his fall in the future must have been certain. The Empire was undermined before the war in Russia; that edifice of force could not have endured. Prometheus in vain defies the word of Zeus; Genius contends in vain against Supreme Fact; the ministers of vengeance reach their victim.

CHAPTER XI.

Return of Napoleon from Russia — The conspiracy of Malet — Immense exertions of Napoleon to restore his armies—Defection of York — Rising of Germany against France — Efforts made by France to retain her military supremacy — Battles of Lützen and Bautzen — Policy of Austria — Metternich — The Armistice of Pleisnitz—The Peninsular War—Battle of Vitoria—Its importance—Negotiations between the Allies and Napoleon—His military preparations and those of the Allies—Renewal of hostilities—Strategy of the Allies — Battle of Dresden — Battle of Culm — Battles of the Katzbach, Gross Beeren, and Dennewitz—Napoleon draws in his forces, and places them on the Elbe — He advances against Blücher and Bernadotte — Defection of Bavaria — Napoleon compelled to march on Leipzig — Battle of Leipzig — Disastrous retreat of the French—Battle of Hanau—Reflections.

HAVING travelled in disguise through Poland and Germany —the conqueror feared assassins in his path — Napoleon was in Paris in the third week of December. Events had occurred which proved the unstable nature of his Revolutionary throne, despite its grandeur, since he had ceased to be the national idol. An obscure Republican officer, of the name of Malet, had forged orders in the

style of the Senate, had escaped from a madhouse, where he was confined, had seized Savary, the head of the police, and had announced that the Emperor had died in Russia; and though the conspiracy was nipped in the bud, the prospect of a Republic, it was observed, seemed to find more favour in the sight of the capital, than the succession of the infant King of Rome. Napoleon made this untoward incident an occasion to denounce the "ideology" of the day, as a main source of danger to the State, in an address to his obsequious Council; and he pretended that the immense disaster of Russia was less really important than the lately suppressed plot.

He was soon engaged in a nobler work than dissimulation and paltering with facts; and his commanding genius was again seen in his efforts to restore his military power, shaken to its foundations since the retreat from Moscow. He had promised his marshals at Smorgoni that he would soon rejoin them, with three hundred thousand men; and as his Austrian and Prussian allies, to the right and the left, had not suffered much, as large reinforcements had reached Wilna, and as numerous reserves had been assembled between the Rhine, the Elbe, and the Oder, he had calculated at the time that the Grand Army would be still at least two hundred thousand strong, and that he would be in the field, in spring, with half a million of men, without tasking to the utmost the resources of France. These previsions, however, had been frustrated by a series of events of the worst omen. Schwartzenberg and his Austrians had fallen back, offering no resistance to the advancing enemy,

and making for Galicia, through the wastes of Poland; the levies of Wilna had melted away; and even the reserves had suffered much from privations and the hardships of winter. The worst, however, had come from down-trodden Prussia; York, one of the chiefs of the Prussian forces, had revolted, and, defying Macdonald, had carried with him the whole contingent, exulting at the fall of its conquerors; and this sudden defection had proved the avalanche changing, in a moment, the face of the landscape.

The national movement against French tyranny, which for some years had been stirring Germany, came at once to a head, and swept all before it; Prussia led the whole race, and called it to arms; the King, fearing Napoleon, fled to Breslau; and even the vassals of the Confederation of the Rhine were unable or unwilling to oppose the mighty impulse spreading from the Oder to the Rhine. In these circumstances, Eugene Beauharnais, who had taken the command of the ruined army since Murat had left it in weak despair, found himself without his expected supports; Macdonald escaped with difficulty, through a host of enemies; the French troops which had recrossed the Niemen did not exceed ten or twelve thousand men; the reserves had dwindled down to seventy or eighty thousand; and the Prince found it impossible, as the Emperor had hoped, to maintain himself on the line of the Vistula. Having strengthened the garrisons of Thorn and Dantzig — there were large French garrisons, it will be borne in mind, in the fortresses of the Oder and Vistula — Eugene was compelled to retreat to the

Elbe, surrounded by a huge popular rising, and pursued by a victorious enemy. He brought with him at most forty-five thousand men, all that remained, in the field, of the Grand Army, once six hundred thousand strong, including reserves; and this was very different from the two hundred thousand, the number on which Napoleon had confidently relied.

These disasters, however, did not shake the Emperor; they only nerved him to redoubled efforts. He had called out the Conscription of 1813, and had summoned the militia of the National Guards, to join the tricolor for a campaign in Germany, and these levies would have given him the three hundred thousand men, alone considered, at first, necessary. He now called out the Conscription of 1814, once more anticipating the regular supply, made another appeal to the National Guards, drew thousands of troops from the armies in Spain, collected fine regiments from the marines of the fleets, and arrayed numbers of youths of the wealthier orders in France, into bodies of choice horsemen, called guards of honour; and, by these exertions, he was not only able to place two hundred thousand men, in three months, into line, but ultimately succeeded in raising his forces to the prodigious total of five hundred thousand, assembled between the Rhine and the Vistula. Unaided despotism, powerful as it still was, could never have accomplished results like these; and France passionately seconded her ruler's enterprise. Discontented, in truth, as the nation was, and suffering from wars that never ceased, it was bent on

being still the Queen of the Continent; and on keeping its supremacy in arms intact; and it sent its sons in tens of thousands to the field, and lavished its resources to renew the struggle, with the patriotic and universal energy it has shown in many a passage of its checkered history. The great cities and towns voted gifts of money, and undertook to furnish bodies of horsemen; the murmurs against the Conscription ceased, and the National Guards, though not bound to serve abroad, flocked, in multitudes, to the Imperial standards. A great national rising, in a word, was seen; and Napoleon turned to the best advantage the immense military means placed freely in his hands, and made admirable use of the aptitude for war, of a race, often the wonder and terror of Europe.

He restored his lost artillery from his great arsenals; to a certain extent replaced the cavalry, which had perished in the frozen steppes of Russia; and had soon arrayed enormous masses of infantry, the young troops being blended with old soldiers, and trained by experienced and skilful officers drawn from Spain and from every part of the Empire. By April, 1813, two hundred thousand men, we have said, had answered Napoleon's summons; and these enormous masses, formed into seven *corps d'armée*, were ready to advance to the Rhine and the Elbe. The new Grand Army which had risen, as it were, out of the earth, was very different, as an instrument of war, from the army of Austerlitz, Jena, and Friedland; but it was a marvellous creation of genius and power, and it presented a martial and grand appear-

ance. The Emperor had defrayed the immense expenditure, required for this gigantic effort, by a treasury paper charged on the lands of the Communes, a resource sufficient for immediate needs, but too like the assignats of 1792–4.

Napoleon had reached Mayence by the third week of April, endeavouring to rally the Confederation of the Rhine; and he was soon on his way, through the scenes of Jena, at the head of more than one hundred thousand men. Screening the movement skilfully behind the Saale, he effected his junction with Eugene, who had approached him from the western bank of the Elbe; and the war-worn veterans of the retreat, and the young soldiers of France, met each other with mingled awe and emotion. By this time Prussia had declared war, and a combined Russian and Prussian army, from 100,000 to 110,000 strong—large detachments had been left to besiege or to mask the fortresses on the Oder and Vistula—had hastened, unresisted, beyond the Elbe, encouraging the great German rising; false strategy from the mere military point of view, for it exposed the Allies to a formidable attack, but giving increased strength to the general national movement. The Emperor resolved to fall on his enemies, thrown forward, as they had so often been, to cut them off from the Elbe, and to force them against the Bohemian hills; and he marched on Leipzig, through the broad plains of Lützen, where Gustavus had fallen in the arms of victory. A chance shot had deprived him of Bessières, one of his best lieutenants of the old days of Italy; but he set at naught an inauspicious

omen, and, as he had fully one hundred and forty thousand men in his hands, he looked forward confidently to a decisive triumph.

The Allies, however, overborne by the energy of Blücher, fast becoming the head and master-spirit of the Prussian army, attacked the French on the 2d of May, relying on the power of their numerous cavalry, on ground favourable in the extreme to that arm; and they hazarded the attack, though very inferior in numbers, and though one of their principal masses was leagues distant. They probably would have gained important success, had not Napoleon, with prescient skill, taken precautions for the speedy concentration of his troops, and distributed them in part, on a few defensive points; and, as it was, the furious onset of Blücher, and especially the fine charges of the Prussian cavalry, though admirably repelled for hours by Ney, placed the Emperor's centre in the gravest peril. By degrees, however, the French masses converged on the enemy, on either wing; the Imperial Guard, still largely composed of veterans, drew off the pressure from the disbanding levies, and the Allies slowly retired from the field. Napoleon continued his onward march, but painful thoughts must have crossed his mind. His army was far more numerous than that of the Allies, but he had narrowly escaped a real disaster, and in fact, had lost more men than his enemy; he was so weak in cavalry that he had no means of following up his partial success; and Russians and Prussians had shown a savage constancy, exceeding all that he had seen before. Nor was he able to carry out his

design to intercept and destroy his foes. Defective as had been the generalship of its chiefs, the defeated army made good its way over the Elbe, and the Emperor was unable to molest its retreat.

Lützen restored the glory of Napoleon's arms, though a barren, and even a doubtful victory; and the Conqueror entered Dresden in triumph. He had soon recalled his vassal, the King of Saxony, who had fled from his approach, to his capital on the Elbe; he devoted some days to bringing up reinforcements from the Saale and the Rhine, and he summoned the German contingents to his aid. The Allies, meanwhile, had effected their retreat towards the verge of Bohemia, hoping to gain the adhesion of Austria to their cause, and their united armies had taken defensive positions, which had been fortified with assiduous care, between Baützen and Hochkirk along the Spree,—a scene memorable for the defeat of Frederick the Great by the Austrian Daun, in the Seven Years' War. The Emperor had reached his enemy on the 20th of May, and attacked with a large superiority of force, perhaps one hundred and fifty to one hundred thousand men; neglecting the allied left, on the heights of the Tronberg, he fell on the centre and right in the marshes of the Spree, and Baützen was captured after protracted efforts.

The Russians and Prussians fell back on a second position more formidable, perhaps, than the first, and Napoleon prepared, next day, for a decisive battle. He had directed Ney, with about fifty thousand men, to make a long circuitous march to the left,

and to close on the flank and rear of his foes; and, while this grand manœuvre was being carried out, he assailed the Allies furiously in front. The resistance, however, was stern and heroic; Ney, either because his march was slow, or, more probably, because he had lost the confidence given by unbroken success, failed to intercept the retreat of the enemy; and Prussians and Russians drew off by Würchen and Hochkirk, defeated indeed, but not cowed or routed. The great movement of Ney, which had promised results almost equal to those of Ulm and Jena, had not fulfilled the Emperor's hopes; the quarry had escaped the toils he had laid; Baützen, like Lützen, had been a fruitless triumph; and the losses, on both sides, had been nearly equal—fifteen thousand to eighteen thousand men. "What a massacre for nothing," was the angry cry of the baffled and disconcerted Conqueror.

Napoleon was soon on the verge of the Oder, almost within reach of his strongholds on the stream, the Allies steadily falling back before him. Another of his old friends of the camp, Duroc, Duke of Friuli, had fallen by his side; one after the other the stars were setting in the constellation of his first years of glory. It might have been supposed that he would spare no effort to complete the success he had certainly gained; but he had ere long formed a momentous purpose, which proved a turning-point in his wonderful career. The position of Austria had become one of growing importance, on the theatre of events, since Russia and Prussia had declared war; it resembled that of Prussia in 1805, and, in fact,

Austria had begun to hold the balance between enemies, obviously not unequally matched. But the policy of Austria, for some time directed by the artful and prudent Metternich, had had nothing in common with the reckless levity which had brought about the disaster of Jena.

Austria, reduced by Napoleon to a second-rate Power, and necessarily hostile to the French Empire, had certainly wished to seek her own advantage in the frightful catastrophe of 1812; and her sympathies were with the great German rising, and especially with old monarchic Europe. But she was formally an ally of France; she had given Napoleon a child of her rulers; she had felt the whole weight of his terrible sword; if, not improbably, she had dropped a hint to Schwartzenberg to let Tchitchakoff pass in the memorable contest on the Beresina, and she had, we believe, directed Schwartzenberg to retire from Poland into Galicia, her attitude was one of attention to events during the first months of 1813. Napoleon perfectly understood this conduct; and thinking that he could gain Austria by a bribe, as he had gained Prussia just after Austerlitz, he offered her Silesia, the great province torn from Maria Theresa by Frederick the Great, and invited her to join him in force in the field. Metternich seized the occasion with consummate skill: he placed the armaments of Austria on a war footing, pretending to accept the Emperor's terms; he negotiated secretly with the Allies, and especially with the Confederates of the Rhine, in the interest of a great European settlement; and thus having by degrees

passed from the position of a dependent ally to that of a leading Power that could control events, he proposed to Napoleon to make Austria a mediator in the existing contest.

The conditions of peace he suggested, rather than urged, would have left the Conqueror still the Lord of the Continent; Metternich thought only of detaching from the overgrown empire the Hanse Towns and the Illyrian Provinces, of the dissolution of the Confederation of the Rhine, and of the cession of most of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw to Prussia; and he announced that even England would perhaps be satisfied if Sicily and Spain were bestowed on the House of Bourbon. Very possibly Metternich had not acted in good faith, in all this, to France; he was the weak fox dealing with the lion; but it is extraordinary, and an additional proof of Napoleon's boundless ambition and pride, that he did not instantly accept these terms, after Moscow, and even Lützen and Baützen. He felt, however, that he had been outwitted, and haughtily rejected, as beneath his notice, the magnificent offers of the Austrian statesman; and he actually made overtures to Prussia and the Czar, to treat for a separate peace for themselves, which would have left Austria exposed to his strokes. The Allies, perhaps already assured of Austria, refused to negotiate on this basis; and Napoleon, on this, came to a resolve which has been called the capital mistake of his life. His deficiency in cavalry, and the weakness of his rude levies, had become manifest; and he persuaded himself, that, if he could gain time, he would be able so

to strengthen his forces as to crush Prussia and Russia in the field, and should Austria appear in the lists against him, to punish her for what he deemed her perfidy. With these convictions, belied as they were by all that was passing before his eyes, he signed an armistice on the 4th of June, not far from the little town of Pleisnitz; and if he contemplated a peace after his own fashion,* his correspondence discloses his real intentions.

Negotiations had only just begun, when events, on a distant theatre of war, quickened the consummation, to which things were tending. After Fuentes de Onoro the contest in Spain had languished in 1811, though Marmont and Soult missed a great chance of assailing Wellington, with very superior numbers. In the following year the British commander pounced on Ciudad Rodrigo, and Badajoz, the keys of Spain from the Portuguese frontier, completely deceiving the distant Emperor, who would direct operations from Paris; and he defeated Marmont in a great battle, at Salamanca, beside the Tormes, which threw open to him the gates of Madrid. Yet, in an effort made against the communications of the French, the object he steadily kept in view, he was baffled by the resistance of Burgos, and before long he was in retreat on Portugal, having just

* The purpose of Napoleon at this juncture is clearly revealed in many of his letters. Two passages may be briefly referred to: "Je désire la paix, je la désire solide, mais il faut qu'elle soit négociée, et honorable."—*Corr.*, tome xxv., 344. "L' insolence de l'Autriche n'a pas de terme, avec son style mielleux, je dirais même, sentimental elle voudrait m'ôter la Dalmatie," etc., etc. "Il est impossible d'être plus perfide que cette cour."—*Ibid.*, 347, 348.

escaped from a great French army, so various were the fortunes of this most instructive war.

In 1813 the situation of affairs had changed, and Wellington gained the decisive success, largely due, no doubt, to the errors of his foes, but, also, to his patient and far-sighted strategy. By this time the insurrection in Spain, though raging fiercely, in most of the provinces, had passed under the control of a central government; the Cortes at Cadiz had done much in organising and preparing a real army; and this force, large in numbers, and far from contemptible, had been placed in Wellington's hands. The British general, too, had all England at his back, enthusiastic at his repeated triumphs; he had formed his army into a magnificent array, "able to go anywhere, and to do anything," and he had made the Portuguese levies formidable in the extreme, and, indeed, almost as good soldiers as his own. On the other hand, the Imperial armies, though still powerful, had they been well directed, had been greatly weakened by drafts for Germany; the soldiery, too, were discouraged by defeat; and the chiefs were jealous of each other, and without a superior head.

Wellington disposed of nearly two hundred thousand men; one army held Suchet in check in Valencia; another threatened Joseph from the South; British squadrons hung on the Biscayan seaboard; a guerilla warfare made another La Vendée of the tracts between Asturias and Navarre; and Wellington himself was at the head of an invincible force nearly ninety thousand strong. He had soon mastered the

line of the Douro; and then drawing together his collected forces, co-operating with the Spanish levies in the North, and finding a secure base in the supporting fleet, he advanced against the long line of the communications of the French, strangling, so to speak, the invasion at the neck. The French armies, scattered and almost surprised, fell back in precipitate haste to the Ebro; and they were huddled at last, in confused masses, into the plains of Vitoria, near the foot of the Pyrenees. Wellington attacked, in great strength, on the 21st of June; the battle was stern and well contested; but nothing could stand against his British troops; the enemy, too, was inferior in numbers; and the French army became a shattered wreck, strewing its flight with the accumulated spoils of provinces and cities, plundered for years. Except where Suchet still held sway in the East, the power of Napoleon in Spain had ceased to exist; and the "Spanish ulcer," as he called it himself, had consumed the best part of his military strength.

Vitoria strengthened the courage of Russia and Prussia, and inclined Austria to throw in her lot with them. Considerable obscurity still hangs on the negotiations that followed the armistice. Napoleon accepted the mediation of Austria, though the acceptance, doubtless, was a mere pretence; and Metternich had an interview with him, perhaps before the Allies had heard of Vitoria. All that took place at that historic meeting has never yet been fully revealed; but Metternich appears to have offered the favourable conditions he had suggested

before; Napoleon certainly lost his temper, and he declared that the object of Austria was to deprive him of large parts of his Empire, and finally to remodel the map of the Continent. By this time Austria had assembled a great army behind the Bohemian ranges; she had perhaps secretly agreed to join the Allies, who were straining every nerve to renew hostilities; her interests and feelings were wholly with them; she was striving to regain her position in Europe; and possibly she was playing Napoleon false, and had resolved to fight once more whatever the hazard.

It is certain, however, that, at the last moment, whether from a real wish for the repose of Europe, or through the fear that Napoleon still inspired, she formally proposed, as a final settlement, terms that would have left the Empire almost intact. She only demanded the cession of the Illyrian Provinces, and of the Hanse Towns, but lately annexed, the abolition of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, and of the protectorate of the Confederation of the Rhine, and a just reconstruction of the Prussian monarchy; and these conditions, which, it will be borne in mind, differed but slightly from what had been indicated before, would have left France not only her "natural boundaries," but Holland, Italy, and the vassal kingdom of Naples. Even, if, as Napoleon always insisted, these proposals were merely diplomatic feints, he ought at once to have agreed to them, if it was only to put Austria in the wrong; and that he ever hesitated only shows how his commanding intellect had been perverted by arrogance and the lust of

empire.* His purpose, however, had been formed; he rejected, for the second time, the immense offers, which, sincerely or not, had been made to him; and he resolved once more to appeal to the sword, and to contend, whatever the risk, even against all Europe, for the absolute domination he had already lost.

By this time his preparations were complete. He had increased his cavalry to fifty thousand sabres; he had greatly improved his rude levies; and, including his garrisons, he had raised his forces, in Germany, to five hundred thousand men, the number, we have seen, he had hoped to muster. Surveying the theatre of war with his matchless insight, he had formed a plan of operations singularly like that which he had formed in 1796, and equally certain, he thought, to assure him success. The hills of Bohemia resembled the Tyrol; the Elbe corresponded to the Adige; and he had resolved to occupy the line of the Elbe, to resist, from this position of vantage, the converging attacks of the hosts of his enemies, and to revive the glories of Mantua and Rivoli. For this purpose he had fortified Dresden, taken possession of all the passages of the Elbe, and its fortresses from Koenigstein to Ham-

* Thiers in his great work on *The Consulate and Empire* (chap. 49) has followed Metternich's version of these celebrated negotiations, which is not altogether trustworthy. Prince Napoleon in his book, *Napoléon et Ses Détracteurs* (75, 83), has argued ably on the other side. Probably Austria, who was seizing a great occasion to recover part of her lost power, was not acting in perfect good faith; certainly Napoleon had resolved to make peace on his own terms, or to fight to the last.

burg; and this was his main position on the whole field of manœuvre. He threw out, however, secondary armies, towards the Oder, and even near to Berlin, in order to stretch a hand to his double line of garrisons on the Oder and Vistula, and to maintain his grasp on the whole of Germany; and, in this important respect, his strategy differed from that which had wrought wonders in 1796. In this situation he stood defiant: he had, after deducting the troops in the strongholds of the three great German rivers, about three hundred and sixty thousand men in the field, formed into thirteen *corps d'armée*, a fourteenth being in and round Hamburg; and contemplating the situation, with a conqueror's eye, he looked forward to the result with the most perfect confidence.

Yet signs of ill omen had thickened around*; some of Napoleon's lieutenants were almost untried; all without exception, had been fashioned to unthinking obedience to his will, and when placed in independent command, as necessarily would be the case at present, might prove unequal to the tasks before them; and the hand of the great master could not be seen everywhere. The Grand Army, too, improved as it was, was still largely composed of young French levies; Napoleon had tried to add to the speed of its movements, but the infantry was feeble, and the guns too numerous, a defect on the increase since Wagram; above all, its ranks were filled with auxil-

* Napoleon's letters of this period abound in expressions of distrust in the capacity of his generals. General Marbot's *Mémoires*, tome iii., 259, expresses the dissatisfaction felt by the army towards many of its chiefs.

iaries, carried away by the great German movement, and not only willing, but eager to revolt. Two incidents were of marked significance*; Moreau in exile since the plot of George Cadoudal, had gone into the camp of the Allies, and been received with the highest honours; and Bernadotte, bought by a promise of Norway, had become an obsequious vassal of the Czar.

The armistice was denounced on the 10th of August; Austria ready to strike, joined the allied cause; and hostilities began a few days afterwards. Napoleon was assailed by Europe in arms; and had to confront a Coalition, in every respect, more formidable than he had ever confronted before. The Allies had more than five hundred thousand men in the field, divided into three great armies, one, under Schwartzenberg in Bohemia; the second led by Blücher, on the Upper Oder; the third under Bernadotte, covering Berlin; and they had fully three hundred thousand in reserve,—a force to which Napoleon had nothing to oppose. The Emperor, therefore, was utterly overmatched; he had miscalculated the resources of his foes; and it is this circumstance which shows that his policy, in agreeing to the armistice, was a fatal error. His miscalculation had been mainly due to his want of knowledge

* The student of Shakespeare will compare Napoleon, at this crisis of his fate, to Macbeth at bay. Act 5, Scene 3.

"Fly, false thanes,
And mingle with the English epicures;
The mind I sway by, and the heart I bear,
Shall never sagg with doubt, or shake with fear."

of the real military strength of Prussia. That power, we have seen, had been compelled by her conqueror to reduce her army,—it was, in no case, to exceed forty-two thousand men,—but she had evaded this harsh restriction; under the inspiration of Scharnhorst, a very able man, she had passed a succession of youths through the ranks, had given them a partial training for war, and had placed them, in an ever-increasing reserve; the foundation, in fact, of the famous system, of which the present age has beheld the results, was established, under the stress of misfortune, and Prussia, in the autumn of 1813, sent two hundred thousand men into the field.

Apart, too, from the contest in Germany, England had been completely victorious in Spain, and even in Italy, Eugene Beauharnais was opposed by an Austrian army, larger than his own; it should be added, that the allied armies were lavishly supported by British subsidies, and kept in a better state than in any previous war; and thus on every side of his imperilled Empire, Napoleon had to resist enemies far superior in strength. Yet these material elements were not, perhaps, the most formidable of the powers now combined against him. The military position of the Allies, spread as they were, on an immense arc, of which he held, at all points, the chord, was, certainly, not so good as his; they had no chief approaching Napoleon in genius; they were not wholly free from internal divisions. But the Coalition, on the main theatre of war, was held together by treaties and bonds of a moral kind, of prodigious strength; and in Austria, Prussia, and Russia, for the first

time, both governments and nations were banded together, in a life and death struggle with their late conqueror. The Czar had Friedland and Moscow to avenge; the Prussian monarchy had to rise out of the dust; the Austrian to regain its place on the Continent; and all the three Powers had a strong common interest,—to get rid of a Saxon Poland, of the Confederation of the Rhine, and of a France seated on the Elbe and the Vistula. The three peoples were one in mind with their rulers; they had suffered from the Continental system, and from all kinds of humiliation, tyranny, and wrong; and in Germany especially, in which many dividing barriers had been effaced with the old Empire, and in which the whole Teutonic race had groaned under French oppression, the feeling against its masters was fierce and intense, and there was powerful tendency to national unity. The great moral forces, which, twenty years before, had given France invincible might, patriotic passion, and a universal resolve to drive the invader from the natal soil, had, in a word, passed to the side of the Allies; old feudal and monarchic Europe was upheld by the Revolutionary fervour of 1792–4; and in the opposite scale were to be found only a despot of extraordinary gifts, indeed, but half-blinded by extravagant pride, an army, still formidable, but comparatively weak, and a people heroic, no doubt, but exhausted.

Napoleon, however, cared for none of these things —was he not the chief of Marengo and Jena?—and he instantly assumed his wonted offensive. Oudinot, with one of the secondary armies, marched against

Berlin, the "focus" as his master called it, "of a Jacobin *canaille*"; and this movement was to be supported by Davoust from Hamburg. Meanwhile, the Emperor advanced, in person, against the army of Silesia, in the hands of Blücher, perhaps from one hundred to one hundred and twenty thousand strong, which had been pushed forward to the line of the Bober. The Allies, probably acting on the advice of Moreau, a judicious, if not a great captain, had formed a general plan of conducting the war, suggested, perhaps, by the wide distance between Napoleon's secondary and main forces, and wholly differing from the Austrian strategy of 1796; they had resolved to retire before their great antagonist, on every occasion, when he appeared in the field, and to endeavour to defeat his lieutenants in detail; and they would seek to strike down the Emperor only when his military resources were plainly failing. Blücher, accordingly, fell back behind the Katzbach, after a series of combats of no importance; and Napoleon was soon back on his way to Dresden, to make head against another mass of enemies. Still true to the common strategic scheme, Schwartzenberg had moved from behind the Bohemian hills, with an army of more than two hundred thousand men; and having threaded the defiles of the Erzegebirge, he had approached Dresden in the last week of August. Napoleon conceived a grand design of cutting off and destroying this new enemy, worthy of the chief of Arcola and Rivoli. He occupied the passages on the Elbe, and he decided for a moment, on crossing the river at Koenigstein, perfectly bridged at this

point; and to fall on the flank and rear of the allied army, before it could get back to Bohemia again, as he had fallen on Würmser, in the defiles of the Brenta. Dresden, however, a German, and not a loyal town, was not like the Italian towns on the Adige; it showed signs of terror, perhaps of revolt; it was held, too, by a comparatively small French force; and the Emperor was compelled to abandon a project, which might have given him decisive success.

He directed Vandamme, with about thirty thousand men, to cross the Elbe, and to hold the line of the enemy's retreat, in front of Pirna; and he advanced himself with about one hundred thousand to Dresden, to relieve the place and to attack the enemy; a complex operation being substituted for one more simple, and easier to carry out. He had reached Dresden on the 26th of August; Schwartzenberg, unaware, perhaps, of his presence, or possibly because it was too late to fall back, attacked Dresden in force, and gained some success; but the Army of Bohemia was ultimately repelled; the appearance of the Guard, a sign that its great chief was at hand, creating an impression that approached a panic.* On the 27th the turn of Napoleon had come; seizing the features of the ground with his unerring glance, and making the best use of the fortifications he had raised, he routed the allied left wing, cut off from its supports, and made havoc of its exposed centre; and Schwartzenberg's army, severely

* See General Marbot's *Mémoires*, tome iii., 271. With the single exception of Blücher, the Continental generals never completely shook off the dread of Napoleon which had haunted them for years.

stricken, was soon in precipitate retreat on its way to Bohemia. Moreau had fallen by a shot from a French battery—a sorry end for a great French soldier.

Consummate military skill had once more prevailed, and Napoleon believed that he had but to extend his arms, and to march either to Berlin or to Prague. Events, however, occurred in quick succession, which showed how the conditions of the present contest had changed from those of 1796–1807. The Emperor directed Murat, St. Cyr, and Mortier to pursue Schwartzenberg's defeated army; he advanced to Pirna, with the same object in view; and he ordered Vandamme to move still farther, and to close on the enemy in full retreat. The events that followed are somewhat obscure; Napoleon was seized with illness, and returned to Dresden; and St. Cyr, and perhaps Mortier were remiss in co-operating with Vandamme, a not distant colleague. But Vandamme marched to Culm on the Bohemian side of the hills; he stood on the path of the retiring Allies; and an apparition like this, a few years before, would have probably led to a Marengo or Ulm. The army of Bohemia, however, had not lost heart; its chiefs had time to ascertain the strength of their foe; the troops fought well, and showed no signs of yielding; and at last a Prussian detachment, which had eluded St. Cyr, descended upon the rear of the French. Vandamme and nearly two thirds of his men were surrounded, and compelled to lay down their arms; and a possible disaster had become a complete victory.

Meanwhile, on every other part of the theatre of war, the tide of fortune set, with terrible results, against the Conqueror, who thought that he was its master. Oudinot had not received the expected aid; he met Bernadotte at the head of about ninety thousand men at Gross Beeren, not far from Berlin, and was driven back on the Elbe, with heavy loss, the auxiliary troops disbanding in thousands. Macdonald, nearly at the same time, had been attacked by Blücher upon the Katzbach, and had suffered an overwhelming defeat; and, a few days afterwards, Ney, ordered to make another effort to reach Berlin, was routed at Dennewitz with crushing effect, and forced upon Torgau, his German troops, mutinous, and running away, making, as he exclaimed, "a hell of his army." During this series of events, the army of Schwartzenberg, revived after Culm, and largely reinforced, had been making demonstrations against Dresden; but it carefully avoided giving battle. Napoleon toiled in vain to bring it to bay; he advanced more than once to the Bohemian range; but he was eluded by his foe, and gave up the attempt at last.

It was now the middle of September, and the situation had become one of ever-increasing peril for him. His lieutenants, unfit for great commands, had been defeated one after the other; he had lost fully one hundred thousand men, and had scarcely any available reserves; his auxiliary troops had proved worse than useless; his immature Grand Army had been fatally weakened; Culm, so to speak, had blotted out Dresden; and he had not won a single

decisive battle. By this time he seems to have felt that he had made a mistake, in throwing out large forces far from the Elbe; so he drew in the remains of these beaten armies, and placed them upon the line of the river; though his garrisons on the Oder and Vistula were, obviously, all but abandoned by this movement. Astride on the Elbe, as he had been astride on the Adige, he was still convinced that he could defy his enemies.

October was at hand, and the Allies, whose strategy, timid but judicious, had been justified, had, at last, resolved to make a great effort to attack, and to overwhelm the Emperor. Benningsen, with another Russian army, was coming into line; Schwartzenberg, urged by Blücher, an heroic soldier, if no master of the art of war, descended once more through the Bohemian passes; and, preceded by clouds of light cavalry, and by insurrectionary levies of Germany, endeavoured to make his way to Leipzig; while Blücher, decamping from near Dresden, marched to the Elbe, summoning Bernadotte to his aid, and prepared to cross the river in force, and, ultimately, to join hands with his Austrian colleague. The object of these manœuvres was to seize the communications of the French with the Rhine, to place a largely superior force on Napoleon's rear, and to compel him to fight, at great risk, at Leipzig; and his position somewhat favoured the project—for owing to the want of sufficient reserves, his communications were not well covered, and the line of the Elbe, unlike that of the Adige, was long, and comparatively easy to pass, two important points which made

the situation of affairs unlike that of 1796. Yet the operation of the Allies was very hazardous; it exposed them to the attacks, before they could unite, of a warrior, who surpassed all warriors in defeating, in detail, divided enemies; and it strongly resembled, though on a much greater scale, the operations which had had, as results, Castiglione, Bassano, and Rivoli.

Napoleon had soon penetrated the designs of his foes, and he prepared to encounter them by the methods which had given him the most splendid success in Italy. Detaching Murat, with about sixty thousand men, to hold Schwartzenberg in check, and to keep him away from Leipzig, he broke up from Dresden, in the first days of October, with an army perhaps eighty thousand strong, his purpose being to join Ney and Marmont, and with a combined force of fully one hundred thousand men, to fall on Blücher and Bernadotte before they could unite, to defeat them, and to cut them off from Schwartzenberg. The Emperor, however, left St. Cyr at Dresden, with a garrison of nearly thirty thousand troops, as he had continued the siege of Mantua before he attacked Alvinzi; his reason for taking a course which has been severely censured, being, probably, that he thought himself in sufficient strength, and that he required Dresden for ulterior movements. Meanwhile, Blücher had effected the passage of the Elbe at Elster, a place not far from Wittenberg, and Bernadotte, too, but much lower down; the two commanders were far apart; and Napoleon, if not exactly aware where they were—for the distances were very

different from those of 1796—marched against them, hopeful of a great triumph. His purpose was to strike his divided foes, should they await his attack, on the western bank of the Elbe; but, if, as he thought probable, they should recross the Elbe, he had resolved to pursue them to Berlin, and then, swiftly returning, to assail Schwartzenberg, beating the hostile armies, one after the other, and "finishing the war in a clap of thunder." This magnificent design, one of the grandest of his career, and practicable in a contest of an ordinary kind, was frustrated by a series of events which suddenly changed the situation on the theatre of war. Bavaria, his vassal of yesterday, declared against him, and was about to place a force on his line of retreat; Jerôme's kingdom of Westphalia had suddenly fallen; the Confederation of the Rhine was vanishing amidst the great German national rising; and Napoleon's communications with the Rhine and with France were menaced from all sides and in the gravest peril. Meanwhile, Murat, wholly inferior in force, had been unable to restrain Schwartzenberg, who was steadily making his way to Leipzig; and Blücher, dragging Bernadotte, as it were, in his wake—the false marshal dreaded his well-known master—was, disregarding all obstacles in his path, pressing forward to reach his approaching colleague. The Emperor was compelled to abandon his project; and, drawing towards Murat, he fell back on Leipzig, to make head against the hosts of his converging enemies.

The strategy of the Allies had thus far been successful; Napoleon's grand offensive projects had

failed; he had not reached and crushed his foes when apart; he had been unable to hold the line of the Elbe, as he had held the Adige against all comers, and had been gradually forced away from it; and he was well-nigh encircled by hostile armies, gathering round in immensely superior numbers, with Germany insurgent on his way to the Rhine. The greater part of the French army was assembled round Leipzig by the 15th day of October; and Augereau had been summoned from the Main to join it, almost the last available reserve. It numbered about one hundred and twenty-five thousand men; and, including all the remaining bodies of troops on the march, the forces Napoleon could place in the field were probably less than two hundred thousand men, thousands of these auxiliaries eager to desert. The enemies were greatly superior in strength; the army of Bohemia, under Schwartzenberg, was still perhaps one hundred and sixty thousand strong; Blücher was coming up with about sixty thousand; Benningsen was at hand with fifty thousand at least, and Bernadotte had about fifty thousand more, Austrians, Russians, and Prussians, being, in a large measure, troops inured to war, and all being devoted to their cause. The Emperor, therefore, was completely over-matched; yet, he maintained his attitude of serene confidence, and bade his marshals prepare for a great battle, in which his skill, he believed, would ensure him victory.

The Allies attacked on the morning of the 16th; and the army of Bohemia marked its advance by a line of fire, extending to the south-west of Leipzig,

from Dölitz far to the left to Gross Posnau on the right. Napoleon's front, however, along this large space, was covered by villages carefully fortified; the efforts of the assailants were, in a great degree, frustrated by divided counsels of the allied chiefs; and the French maintained their positions intact, and even threw their enemies back. The Emperor now prepared for a grand counter-stroke; the Imperial Guard fell on Schwartzenberg's centre; and Murat very nearly swept away his right by a huge, tempestuous charge of thousands of horsemen. The Allies, however, knowing that reinforcements were at hand, lavished all their reserves to maintain the contest; their troops, too, fought with heroic energy, and though Napoleon had mastered part of the field, this partial success was utterly fruitless. Meanwhile, on other parts of the vast scene of conflict two battles had been fought, with different results. Napoleon had employed a detachment to guard his line of retreat from Leipzig on Lützen; this had been attacked by an Austrian force; but the French had held their ground with success. At the same time Blücher, coming into line, had furiously attacked the extreme right of the Emperor to the north-east of Leipzig; and a savage encounter had raged for hours between the hamlets of Breitenfeld and Möckern. Marmont and Ney had made a noble defence; but the fiery Prussian had had the better in the fight; and as evening closed, his columns had approached the Partha, in the broad plain of Leipzig to the north, and had nearly joined Schwartzenberg and the Bohemian army.

A great victory alone could have averted the perils that encompassed Napoleon; but the battle of the 16th had been indecisive, and his position had become almost desperate. His whole army was soon round Leipzig; but allowing for his losses in the late conflict, it could not have exceeded one hundred and seventy thousand men, whereas Benningsen and Bernadotte had just added at least one hundred thousand fresh troops to the Allies, and Blücher and Schwartzenberg had still more than two hundred thousand. Apart, therefore, from the quality of many of the Emperor's soldiers, the odds against him were overwhelming; and prudence enjoined a retreat on the 17th of October, especially as Schwartzenberg—a timid chief—would have afforded a golden bridge of escape. But Napoleon was over-mastered by pride; he seems to have thought that no enemy would dare to risk a death struggle with him; and he resolved to maintain an imposing attitude, and only to make a retrograde movement from Leipzig after challenging battle. He increased the detachment that held the line of his retreat open; but bridges were not thrown over the Pleisse and the Elster, to give facilities to the march of a retiring army; the only avenue of passage was a long causeway spanning the Elster and the surrounding marshes; and it is still unknown whether this fatal neglect was due to Berthier, the chief of the staff, who, like nearly all the Imperial lieutenants, could not think or act for himself, and would do nothing without a positive order, or was wholly the fault of the Emperor himself.

The Allies, fully three hundred thousand strong, attacked their exhausted foes on the 18th; and a vast semicircle of fire enclosed Leipzig from Möckern by Probstheyda to Dölitz, and narrowed inward as the columns advanced. Yet the efforts of the assailants were not resolute; they were "the peckings of crows round a dying eagle." The allied generals, in fact, were divided in mind, and Blücher alone was for a decisive onslaught; and the Grand Army fought heroically when brought to bay. The French, indeed, maintained their positions to the last; and had not the Saxon contingent of Reynier gone over to the enemy in the heat of the fight, and turned its artillery against its old comrades—fierce patriotism destroying military faith—they might have repelled the masses of their foes. Retreat, however, was necessary now; and the Grand Army, frightfully reduced in strength, defiled all the night through the streets of Leipzig, making for the plains of Lützen to the west, on its way to Mayence and the Rhine. The march, however, was slow in the extreme; the troops were burdened by *impedimenta* of all kinds; and the columns were choked, so to speak, in their advance, because the rivers had not been bridged, and they were confined to the one long bridge on the Elster.

The Allies attacked on the 19th, falling on the rear of the retiring army, and cutting off stragglers and wounded men; and panic was spreading through the ranks of the French, when a sudden disaster involved them in ruin. The single causeway was blown up too soon; the retreat was interrupted by this fatal accident; scenes like those of the Beresina were

again witnessed; Poniatowski and an untold multitude perished in the waters of the flooded Elster; whole divisions and regiments were made prisoners; and the triumph of the Allies was complete and decisive.* The shattered army, scarcely ninety thousand fugitives, made its way slowly through the plains of Saxony; a gleam of light shone on its arms for a moment, for Napoleon routed the Bavarian Wrede, who attempted to cross his path at Hanau; but probably not sixty thousand Frenchmen—the auxiliaries had disappeared by degrees—found a refuge at last behind the Rhine. As a result of the catastrophe, the large garrisons in the fortresses of the Elbe, the Oder, and Vistula, were left isolated amidst hosts of enemies; and one hundred and fifty thousand † good troops at least were lost to France in her hour of defeat.

In this mighty and long-doubtful contest, Napoleon made obvious military mistakes. He ought not to have thrown out his secondary armies so far; he ought, probably, to have abandoned Dresden when he marched against Blücher and Bernadotte; assuredly he should have begun to retreat immedi-

* Very interesting and valuable details about the retreat from Leipzig will be found in General Marbot's *Mémoires*, tome iii., 47, 327. See also *Edinburgh Review*, January and April, 1892, and the *Souvenirs* of Marshal Macdonald.

† In passing from the campaigns of 1812 and 1813, the reader should be informed, that the numbers of the armies engaged on both sides can be only approximately ascertained. The truth has been obscured from many causes. The figures in the text are calculated from a comparison of several conflicting accounts. Boutourline should be read for the War of 1812, on the Russian side.

ately after the first battle of Leipzig; as commander-in-chief he must be held responsible for the catastrophe that occurred on the Elster. Yet his capacity for organisation was never more conspicuous than in 1813; some of his operations were quite faultless, and marked with his ineffaceable genius; and though the long line of the Elbe was more difficult to defend than the short line of the Adige, his choice of it, given his plan for the campaign, reveals the strategist of marvellous gifts; and he would have probably held it with the army of 1805. His bodily strength, indeed, had begun to decline, and this may have led to the disaster of Culm, and this physical weakness was to become more apparent. Yet mere military errors cannot account for the terrible overthrow of his arms; the causes were more general and deeply seated; and, in the main, they were the same as those which brought about the calamities of 1812. Cold, and the difficulty of moving, were, doubtless, absent; but the Grand Army was, on the whole, even a worse army than that which invaded Russia, and the auxiliaries had become, not only faithless, but, in the highest degree, a grave danger. The decisive cause, however, was that, as in 1812, the enterprise was beyond Napoleon's powers; despising the forces arrayed against him, which, moral and material alike, were, in 1813, far superior to his own, he defied Europe, and fought for universal empire; this was the real reason why he placed his secondary armies as far as the Oder, why he persisted in maintaining his hold on Germany, why he shut up whole armies in far distant fortresses. Had he been satisfied to

take his stand on the Rhine, drawing his garrisons in from the German rivers, he could have repelled the Coalition with ease; but this implied the surrender of overgrown power, and the great gambler with Fortune played for all or nothing.

Yet the most disastrous error of all was the refusal to accept the terms of Austria, after the injudicious armistice of Pleisnitz; even if Austria was playing false he might perhaps have divided the Allies, and probably he would have saved, at least for a time, the greater part of an Empire already far too vast. As for the operations of the Allies, if not brilliant, they were prudent, and sometimes well conceived; but Blücher alone, of the chiefs of the League, showed the qualities of a great soldier; the others were timid and irresolute; and the conduct of their troops stands in marked contrast. The position of Napoleon was now like that of Lee when the gigantic hosts of the North bore down on the exhausted South in 1864–5; and, in the case of Napoleon, as in that of Lee, and even with more amazing results, genius in war was yet to achieve wonders. But the end was at hand, and the great disturber of the world was soon to feel the "iron scourge and the torturing hour" of pitiless Fate, amidst the wreck of Empire.

CHAPTER XII.

Preparations made by Napoleon to resist the invasion of France by Europe—Proposals of peace made by the Allies—Their armies cross the Rhine and enter France—The apparently hopeless position of Napoleon—Battle of La Rothière—The allied armies separate and advance towards Paris along the Marne and the Seine—Battles of Champaubert, Montmirail, Vauchamps, Nangis, and Montereau—Defeat of the Allies—Conferences at Châtillon—New proposals of the Allies—Renewed operations on the Marne and the Seine—Battles of Craonne, Laon, and Arcis on the Aube—Defeat of Napoleon—He moves his army eastwards—The Allies march to Paris—Negotiations ending in the abdication of Napoleon—State of opinion in France—Napoleon takes his departure for Elba—Reflections on the events of 1814.

ON his return to France, after Leipzig and Hanau, Napoleon had to hear of fresh disasters on other parts of the vast theatre of war. Eugene had been driven from the Isonzo; and, confronted by a victorious Austrian army, maintained himself with difficulty on the Adige. Events, too, on the Pyrenean frontier, had recently assumed an alarming aspect; Soult, sent by the Emperor, after Vitoria, to restore his military position in Spain, had reorganised the shattered

armies of Joseph, and had skilfully attacked Wellington, who was besieging Pampeluna and San Sebastian, near the verge of France. The Marshal, however, had failed in this effort; the beleaguered fortresses had, ere long, fallen; and the British commander having crossed the Bidassoa, and stormed the lines of his adversary on the hills, above the Nivelle, had penetrated into France, soon after Leipzig, the herald of her invasion by Europe. The Empire was already in grave peril; yet its author retained his faith in his genius and his sword; and in letters, still breathing unbroken confidence,* he prepared to withstand the gathering floods of his enemies.

He called out the Conscription of 1815; but after the experiences of 1813, he declared that he would not "make war again with children"; and he calculated that, by summoning into the field all the available reserves which France could yet supply, he would be able, within a few months, to place in line, with the remains of his armies,† six hundred thousand men to uphold his power. Two circumstances encouraged his ambitious hopes; he was convinced that the Allies would not venture to cross the Rhine until late in the spring, that he would be afforded time to collect his levies, and even to give

* Napoleon wrote thus to Cambacérès, 3d November, 1813. *Correspondance*, tome xxvi., 395. "Aussitôt que je connaitrai bien les ennemies aux quels j'ai affaire, et que je n'aurais plus à craindre des trahisons, ni des crocs en jambe, je les battrai aussi vite que les autres."

† This estimate appears repeatedly in Napoleon's letters in November and December 1813.

them some training for war; he was certain that France would second his efforts, as she had seconded them before Lützen and Baützen; and, indeed, the obsequious Senate, the docile instrument of his will, voted all the men and supplies he asked for, and placed the whole resources of the nation at his feet. Inspired with this belief he resolved, not only to defend France on the Rhine and the Meuse, but even to contend for empire on the Po and the Adige. He considered Germany as wholly lost; and he entered into negotiations with his prisoner Ferdinand, and promised to restore him to the throne of Spain, if the new king could free him of his English enemies. But he made preparations to send thousands of troops to maintain his hold on Belgium, and even on Holland; he sought to reinforce Eugene, and to keep Italy in his grasp; and he left Suchet with an army in Catalonia, to observe what turn events would take in Spain. At the same time he spared no efforts to resist the invasion, which, he foresaw, was impending from the German side of the Rhine, though his arrangements prove that he still believed he could retain a large part of the late conquests of France.

The Coalition, meanwhile, had approached the Rhine; and the Allies had sought to treat with Napoleon before braving the perils of an internecine struggle. If not made through an official source, these proposals, it is almost certain, were sincere; for the memories of Valmy and Jemmapes survived; the failure of 1793 was not forgotten, and the Emperor inspired terror even after Leipzig. These

offers would have left France her "natural boundaries," that is, would have seated her on the Alps and Pyrenees, and would have given her the whole tract to the west of the Rhine, including Mayence, Cologne, and Antwerp; and the aspirations of Frenchmen, it may truly be said, had never really gone beyond limits which it was felt could not be safely extended. Napoleon did not reject these conditions; but he adopted a policy at least too like that which had proved fatal a few months before; believing, perhaps, that the Allies were playing false, he put off a positive reply, and trifled with time; and, whether this conduct was simply distrust, or was a device to mature his preparations for war, he once more let the occasion pass, which, for a season at least, would have left him empire.

Events soon happened which wrought a complete change in the councils and feelings of the Allies, and caused them boldly to continue the war. The contagion of the great rising of Germany had spread into Holland, and even Belgium, long harassed by the Continental system and by Imperial oppression of all kinds; and nearly all the Low Countries stirred with revolt. At the same time Murat, who after Leipzig had returned to his new and imperilled kingdom, had been lending an ear to the soft words of Metternich, and, in order to save the throne of Naples, was seeking a pretext to desert Napoleon, and even to attack Eugene in Italy; and the aristocracies of the Swiss cantons were eager to throw off the Protectorate of France, accepted soon after the Peace of Lunéville. The Empire, in a word, was

breaking up from within, and the Coalition resolved to invade France at once, and to endeavour to bring the contest to a close. The allied armies, formed into two great masses, crossed the Rhine near the end of December, 1813; Blücher, at the head of about eighty thousand men, advancing from Mannheim and the adjoining fortresses; Schwartzenberg, with perhaps one hundred and sixty thousand, passing the river at Basle, overrunning Switzerland, and entering France on her eastern frontier. Immense reserves were collected to sustain the movement; and the Allies hoped that, in a few weeks, even after the losses of the late campaign, they would have half a million of men beyond the Vosges. The conditions of 1812 were, in fact, reversed, and that in the briefest space of time. It was no longer the Despot of the West leading a subject Continent against the East; it was the monarchs and races of Eastern Europe moving against the West in the name of liberty. With characteristic insight Napoleon had perceived one of the forces which had caused the change. "The Continent," he exclaimed, "marched last year with France; the Continent, this year, is marching with England."

This sudden attack took the Emperor by surprise, and seemed to expose him, defenceless, to irresistible foes. The armies, which he had left on the Rhine, already merely the shadows of armies, had suffered cruelly from want and disease; and he had assembled as yet but small bodies of levies, and a few thousand trained soldiers, chiefly drawn from his late Peninsular forces. France, too, was showing no sign of the energy and patriotism of 1813. The spirit of dis-

content, if as yet suppressed, was exhibiting itself in several provinces; and the nation was giving proof of increasing exhaustion. Napoleon confronted the situation as became a warrior; he made Marie Louise, for the second time, regent; gave his brother, Joseph, the command of the capital; directed that all available troops should be sent forward to join his armies; and left Paris near the end of January, 1814, in order to stem the tide of invasion. An untoward incident had lately occurred; the Legislative Body, which had been convened, had ventured to offer a feeble remonstrance against recent instances of arbitrary power; but Napoleon had sternly rebuked the deputies, and if the rebuke shows his despotic instincts, a demonstration of the kind—a significant proof how opinion even now was turning against him—made in the presence of enemies, after years of silence, can hardly obtain the applause of history.

He was in a few hours at Châlons on the Marne, the scene of the memorable defeat of Attila; and he was met by affrighted lieutenants, who had endeavoured, in vain, to check the hosts of the Allies advancing from the Rhine. By this time, Blücher had reached the Upper Marne, having overrun Alsace and Lorraine and masked their fortresses by reserves from the rear; Schwartzenberg had passed through Franche Comté, and held the tract between the Upper Aube and the Upper Seine; and as all Napoleon's forces on the spot did not exceed eighty thousand or ninety thousand men, to a considerable extent inferior troops, the invaders, nearly threefold in numbers, believed that serious resistance was

scarcely possible; and that they would ere long make their way to the capital. But a great captain stood in their path, who had shown, by examples of supreme excellence, how swift and terrible could be his strokes in a central position between enemies apart, and the contest in Champagne was, in a large measure, to renew the marvels of the contest on the Adige. The first incidents of the campaign, however, were of evil omen for the arms of France. Having tried to reassure the hearts of his marshals, Napoleon marched from Châlons, up the stream, on Vitry, at the head of about forty thousand men, his object being to strike Blücher, who was endeavouring to unite with Schwartzenberg, and perhaps to attack Mortier on the Upper Seine near Troyes. Blücher, however, had time to retrace his steps; an indecisive battle was fought at Brienne, the scene of Napoleon's boyhood in France, and though the Prussian chief was, on the whole, worsted, he retreated only a short distance, and was soon joined by his Austrian colleague. The Emperor, meanwhile, had placed himself at La Rothière, with his rear to the Aube; and whether it was that he was surprised, or that with characteristic pride, and overweening confidence, he would not fall back before his foes, he was assailed by the Allies in overwhelming strength, and narrowly escaped a crushing defeat.

February had arrived, and Napoleon's position, after this passage of arms, seemed utterly hopeless. He had been beaten in a pitched battle; the allied armies were almost united; and how could he resist an advance on Paris, made by enemies in immensely

superior numbers? Yet in this hour of misfortune, a consummate master found reasons for hope in the secrets of his art, and refused to admit that success was impossible. With perfect appreciation of the theatre of war, of the position of the Allies upon it, and of the character of the generals opposed to him, he had formed a plan of operations, which, in events that in all probability would occur, would yet, he believed, turn the scale of fortune.

The object of the Allies was to reach Paris; and the main roads to Paris stretched along the Marne and the Seine, lines already held in Champagne by the enemy, and forming the natural ways to the capital. Blücher and Schwartzenberg, therefore, it might be assumed, would, almost necessarily, follow these avenues; but if so, they would be compelled to separate, and their separation might be expected from special causes. Their armies rested on widely divergent bases, the one on the Middle, the other on the Upper Rhine; like Beaulieu and Colli, in 1796, they were, in some measure, divided by ancient jealousies; and the two chiefs, besides, were of opposite natures, the one fiery and audacious, the other timid. They would, therefore, advance along the Marne and the Seine; and, as they would be thus kept apart by wide distances, which, it might be expected, would increase, they would inevitably afford more than one occasion to a resolute foe, of sufficient skill to strike them in succession, and to defeat them in detail. Inspired with these thoughts, Napoleon had ordered the passages on the Marne and the Seine to be fortified, so as to increase his opportuni-

ties of attack; he had placed reinforcements, and all that was required for the field, on an intermediate line between the two rivers; and, convinced that his enemies would advance along them, he had resolved to oppose a single front of defence, to the double and separate front of invasion, and, operating from a centre between the hostile armies, to assail and beat them one after the other. The conception was exactly the same in kind as that which had proved so fruitful in 1796, and it was one of the grandest of an unrivalled strategist.

Napoleon's anticipations were soon realised, and accidents of the situation promoted the result. Macdonald, retreating from the frontier, had been attacked by York, the well-known Prussian of 1812, and had been forced along the Marne towards the capital; and the army of Blücher had been greatly increased, by reinforcements approaching Châlons. Blücher disposed of about seventy thousand men; he believed that he had nothing to fear from Napoleon; he saw in Macdonald an easy prey; he was eager to win in the great race to Paris; so, leaving the Aube, he made across the space which divides the river from the line of the Marne, directing his lieutenants to co-operate with him. By this time Napoleon was at Troyes, on the Seine, with about sixty thousand men in his hands; and the army of Blücher and its supports exposed their flanks to him in long divided columns, as they advanced toward the southern bank of the Marne. The Emperor saw, and seized the occasion; he detached Oudinot and Victor, perhaps thirty thousand strong, to hold

Schwartzenberg's forces in check, and then with Ney, Marmont, and Mortier, he marched at the head of some thirty thousand to attack Blücher, already in a position of grave danger. The movement was one of extreme difficulty; the cross-roads were bad, and the weather most severe, but the genius and ardour of Napoleon prevailed, though he was no longer equal to days of fatigue; and the results were immense and well-nigh marvellous. Breaking in on the side of his separated foes, he crushed Olsuvieff and a large detachment at Champaubert; he then turned to the left, and routed Sacken returning from the pursuit of Macdonald, at Montmirail, with enormous loss; he hastened after York, and drove him across the Marne; and finally he overthrew Blücher at Vauchamps, incautiously advancing to assist his colleagues. In these magnificent operations, which took place between the 10th and 14th of February, Napoleon had captured more than fifteen thousand prisoners—not to speak of killed, wounded, and lost guns—and, for the moment, had ruined Blücher's army, which recoiled along both banks of the Marne, on Châlons; and one front of the invasion was, for the time, broken.

The Conqueror now turned against the second front, the army, as it was still called, of Bohemia; and his success, if not so decisive, was most brilliant. After the departure of Napoleon to attack Blücher, Schwartzenberg had advanced along the Seine, on his way to the capital; and having borne Victor and Oudinot back, had spread his army on both banks of the river, in order probably to make its march

more rapid. His flank, therefore, was exposed, as that of Blücher had been; his forces, too, were divided and scattered; and had the Emperor had a free choice, he would doubtless have descended on this vulnerable side, and perhaps have gained extraordinary success. But the approach of the enemy had terrified Paris; Napoleon was obliged to make a circuit, which placed his army before the threatened city, and he was compelled to fall on Schwartzenberg, in front, a movement that could not lead to such fruitful results. His troops, nevertheless, had been largely reinforced; he was at the head of about seventy thousand men; and he defeated the army of Bohemia at Nangis and Montereau, having only just failed, through the delays of Victor, to cut off a body of twenty thousand men. Though Schwartzenberg had still one hundred thousand within reach, he was afraid to encounter his dreaded enemy, and, baffled and beaten, he fell back to Troyes. The Coalition, which, a few days before, believed that Paris was in its grasp, had been driven back into the midst of Champagne, by operations which will live in history as among the finest masterpieces of war. It is doubtful, indeed, if the difficult exploit of moving an army between divided enemies, has been illustrated by a grander example.

The second front of the invasion had, in turn, been stricken, and an armistice was made as February was about to close. Negotiations, meanwhile, had been in progress for arranging the pacification of Europe, though hostilities had not been allowed to cease. Since the disgrace of Talleyrand, Napoleon

had been his own Minister of Foreign Affairs, for Champagny, Duke of Cadore, and Maret, Duke of Bassano, who had successively filled the office, had, though men of no ordinary powers, been mere exponents of the will of their master; but the Emperor, in deference to the stress of opinion, had lately appointed Caulaincourt, Duke of Vicenza, who had always been an advocate of peace, and had done his best to secure it in 1813. Conferences had been held at Châtillon on the Seine; but the conditions proposed to Caulaincourt were very different from those proposed before the Rhine had been crossed. Instead of leaving France on her "natural boundaries," the Allies had insisted on making the Empire the France only of Louis XVI., that is, on stripping her of her Revolutionary conquests; and they stipulated besides, that France should have no voice in the general rearrangement of the affairs of Europe, though probably this was not their last word. These conditions were certainly harsh in the extreme, nay, intolerable from the point of view of patriotic Frenchmen, especially as France had not rejected the offers made a few weeks before; but Napoleon had given Caulaincourt full powers to treat, when, after La Rothière, his cause seemed desperate, having however left it on record that he would have set at naught a peace extorted as a "capitulation" * by force.

After his extraordinary success on the Marne and the Seine, the Emperor refused even to listen to terms, which † "would cause the blood of French-

* Napoleon to Joseph, *Correspondance*, tome xxvii., 191.

† Napoleon to Caulaincourt, *Correspondance*, tome xxvii., 205.

men to boil in their veins"; he declared that he would make his ultimatum himself; and he preferred to continue the struggle with Europe, and to stake Empire and Crown on the issue, to renouncing the France of Campo Formio at least. The Allies, however, were equally resolute; and it soon became evident that the sword would be the only arbiter. The conduct of the belligerents was characteristic in the extreme. Napoleon's confidence had completely returned; he thought himself invincible once more; he had exclaimed that "he would soon be on the Vistula again"; and plainly he believed that he had still a chance to regain large parts of his lost empire. He did not, accordingly, draw in all his available forces for the defence of France; he left Eugene to make a stand for Italy; if Soult was required to oppose Wellington, he left Suchet on the borders of Spain; and this must be borne in mind in judging his strategy, in this memorable contest as a whole. The Allies, on the contrary, confessed defeat; they were conscious of their inferiority to their mighty enemy; but Europe, they felt, was strong enough to crush him, and they resolved to make force supply the want of genius. At a great Council of War, it was acknowledged that Blücher and Schwartzenberg, superior in number as they were, were not able to overthrow Napoleon *; and fifty thousand men, under Wintzingerode and Bülow, were detached from the army of Bernadotte, and directed towards the deci-

* Lord Castlereagh could not understand this, and as paymaster of the Coalition, demurred to the expense of these reinforcements. "*Milord*," said a bystander, "*vous ne connaissez pas cet homme!*"

sive points on the theatre of war, the plains of Champagne, on the way to Paris. At the same time a treaty was made which drew the bonds of the alliance close, and pledged the Coalition to renewed efforts. The results of Napoleon's victories really were to increase the constancy and even the strength of his enemies.

Hostilities, meanwhile, had been going on in the region between the Marne and the Seine. Blücher who had rallied his broken army, with characteristic boldness and energy, and had soon reached the Seine to give aid to Schwartzenberg, had again set off for the Lower Marne, his object being to attack Mortier, who had been despatched to observe York and Marmont who stood on the intermediate line from which Napoleon drew his supports, and probably to make a dash on the capital. The Prussian veteran had once more exposed his flank to Napoleon, at this moment at Troyes; and the Emperor leaving Macdonald and Oudinot to keep back Schwartzenberg, should he advance by the Seine, proceeded to repeat the fine manœuvres which had given him such great and unexpected success. Blücher, sending a detachment as far as Meaux, endeavoured to cut off Mortier and Marmont, united by this time, from the road to Paris; but the marshals had eluded the stroke; and, crossing the Marne, stood on the Ourcq, an affluent of the larger stream; and Blücher, eager to seize his prey, hastened over the Marne to bring them to bay, though Napoleon was gathering on his rear.

The Emperor crossed the Marne in turn; and

Blücher, now open to the double attack of Mortier, Marmont, and Napoleon combined, had no choice but to fly northwards, and to try to escape beyond the Aisne at Soissons. The Prussian army, harassed and over-matched, was in a situation of extreme peril, when the cowardice and weakness of an inferior French officer saved it from a disaster perhaps more fatal than Champaubert, Montmirail, and Vauchamps. Bülow and Wintzingerode had reached the Aisne, and aware of the ruin hanging over Blücher, had surrounded Soissons, and summoned the place, threatening to storm it, and put the garrison to the sword; the commandant had shamefully opened the gates, and the only passage on the Aisne was thus secured for the enemy, hotly pursued by Napoleon—and Blücher, Bülow, and Wintzingerode had effected their junction! The position of affairs had been transformed by a misadventure terrible as that of Culm; Napoleon had seen his enemy escape, and he had now hardly more than fifty thousand men to oppose to ninety thousand at least. Prudence counselled a return behind the Marne, for Blücher and Schwartzenberg still could be held in check; but the Emperor would not leave his immediate foe, and with that impatient eagerness to strike at once which appears in many parts of his career, he resolved to follow Blücher, still in retreat. On the 7th of March he attacked Wintzingerode at Craonne in a very strong position; and though Blücher fell back, he was not defeated. Two days afterwards the attack was renewed against very superior forces; and Napoleon recoiled from the heights

of Laon, discomfited, and losing thousands of men. He crushed a small hostile detachment in his retreat, but his operations had altogether failed; Blücher and his colleagues alone were too strong for him; and he returned to the Marne with a heavy heart, having lost nearly a fourth of his army, in the calamitous battles of Craonne and Laon.

During these events on the Marne and the Aisne, the army of Bohemia had not been idle; and Schwartzenberg, who had fallen back to the Upper Aube, had easily driven Oudinot and Macdonald back, and advancing along the Seine, had again drawn near Paris. The position of Napoleon was now very critical; Blücher and both his colleagues threatened his right; Schwartzenberg, on his left, was approaching the capital; and they might stifle him by sheer weight of numbers. He descended, however, from the Marne to the Aube, leaving Mortier and Marmont to restrain Blücher; and once more Schwartzenberg, menaced on his flank by his dreaded antagonist, began to retreat. The movement, however, to and fro, between the Marne and the Seine, could not go on forever, and Napoleon formed a new design, from which he drew the augury of splendid success. He had thousands of troops shut up in the fortresses of Lorraine, Alsace, and the provinces of the North-east; these strong places were imperfectly masked; he resolved to set free the beleaguered garrisons, to draw them to his army in the field; and then to sever the communications of the allies with the Rhine, and to place them in the position of Melas, compelled to fight, and struck down at Marengo. This

movement, the counterpart of the march on Berlin, which had been a project of the year before, and magnificent in conception at least, was to be supported by Augereau, advancing from the South, by Suchet and Eugene, at last called in, and Napoleon had calculated that in a few days, he would be at the head of one hundred and fifty thousand men astride on the path of the retreat of his foes.

Intent on this plan, he summoned all his forces to join him on the Aube, where he now was, leaving small detachments only before the capital; and if the operation uncovered Paris, the Emperor was convinced, either that the Allies would not venture to advance so far, or that the city would hold out for a time. He began the movement on the 20th of March; but, before his army had been drawn together he was assailed by Schwartzenberg at Arcis on the Aube, having been surprised by a foe he scorned; and he only just contrived to avoid a defeat. He now marched towards the Upper Marne and the Meuse, his purpose being to advance to the Moselle and to rally the garrison of Metz, in the first instance. His columns had soon disappeared beyond Vitry on the Marne, followed by a body of the enemy's horsemen.

In an ordinary war this great move of Napoleon would have certainly made the Allies pause, and Schwartzenberg, at least, would not have advanced, with a formidable tempest collecting on his rear. But the present was not an ordinary war; and considerations higher than military rules led the Coalition to form a purpose which, otherwise, they might

have been afraid to form. A conspiracy had been hatching against the Empire for some time, in Paris; its master-spirit was the sagacious Talleyrand, who had never forgiven his late disgrace, and who scented from afar the fall of Napoleon*; and though it was confined to a few leading men, discarded dignitaries in most instances, it harmonised with the discontent and alarm already pervading all parts of the capital. The conspirators contrived to obtain the services of an old Royalist, Vitrolles,† a very adroit plotter, who, though he had eaten the bread of Napoleon, thought it right to betray him in the holy Bourbon cause; and Vitrolles had found his way into the allied camp, where he received a welcome every day more cordial, and had set forth his views of the position of affairs. France, he insisted, was sick of despotism and war, and was eager to throw off the yoke of the Empire; and if the Coalition would march on Paris, they would find that the colossus had feet of clay, and that the nation would rise against a tyrant it abhorred.

These ideas, were, in some measure, shared by two very able followers of the Allies, Pozzo di Borgo and

* Napoleon was perfectly aware of Talleyrand's hatred. "Je vous le repéte"—he wrote to Joseph—"méfiez vous de cet homme. Je le pratique depuis seize annees; j'ai même eu de la faveur pour lui; mais c'est sûrement le plus grand ennemi de notre maison, à présent que la fortune l'abandonne." The whole letter shows how despair could sometimes fall on that great mind. *Correspondance*, tome xxvii., 131, 132.

† The *Memoirs* of Vitrolles should be carefully studied for all these events. See also *Edinburgh Review*, July, 1884, and April, 1885.

Stadion, the one a Corsican, the other a well-tried Austrian statesmen, and both personal foes of Napoleon ; and everything, indeed, that was occurring on the scene, confirmed, to a great extent, their opinions. The Duc d'Angoulême, a Bourbon prince, had been welcomed with delight at Bordeaux ; Wellington had been greeted as a deliverer in provinces ruined by the exactions of Soult ; Murat had declared war against his benefactor and kinsman—an instance of baseness not easy to match—and the Empire in the Low Countries had well-nigh vanished. France, too, was evidently falling away from Napoleon ; the Conscription had almost wholly failed ; the treasury paper was becoming worthless ; all the severity of a despotic government had proved abortive in collecting taxes ; the functionaries of the Empire had begun to hide their heads ; and the Emperor had no means to continue the war, save the remains of armies that could hardly be reinforced. Nor was there a sign of the heroic energy and patriotism of 1793–4, which had hurled the invader beyond the frontiers. The nation, fashioned for years to obedience, had been enervated by success and despotic power, and Napoleon had said the truth to one of his generals, who entreated him to summon the People to arms : "I have destroyed the Revolution, and how can I call on it ?" In view of the situation the Allies resolved to march on Paris without more delay and to strike the Empire down in the centre of its power ; and intercepted letters of Marie Louise and Savary which described the capital as likely to imitate Bordeaux, confirmed a decision already made.

On the 25th of March, 1814, the hosts of the Coalition were on their way to Paris. Blücher and Schwartzenberg gradually approached each other, and Marmont and Mortier, who had failed to join Napoleon, as he advanced towards Lorraine, were swept away before the great sea of invasion. Marie Louise, complying with her consort's * orders, fled to Blois with the young King of Rome; a large part of the Court followed; and Joseph had before long vanished. The capital was left without a government, scarcely any preparations for defence were made, the mass of the population had no arms, for it was never imagined that these might be wanted; and the upper and middle classes were at best indifferent. On the 29th the armies of the League of Europe were seen converging into the broad space, now bristling with fortifications and gay with wealth, which extends to the north-east of the city, and on the next morning the attack began. Names to be known in history were among the assailants,—Radetski, Paskevitch, Diebitsch, Nugent—and the exultation of the Allies knew no bounds, as they felt that their grasp was at last laid on the proud seat of Revolution and all-devouring Empire. Marmont and Mortier made an honourable defence, but what could thirty thousand do against one hundred and fifty thousand men? and the citizens made little show of resistance; the

* Napoleon to Joseph in the letter before quoted: "L'interêt même du pays est que l'Impératrice et le Roi ne restent pas à Paris . . . Mon fils regnant et l'Impératrice regente doivent pour l'honneur des Francais ne pas se laisser prendre et se retirer au dernier village avec leurs derniers soldats."

streets were not barricaded as they have often been; and apart from a few thousand National Guards, and the gallant youth of the military schools, the people gave scarcely a sign of life. Before long the uniting tides of invasion had overflowed St. Denis, Romainville, and Vincennes, and had surged round Montmartre and Belleville, and a further defence was pronounced impossible, words that the cities of Spain disdained to hear. The capitulation was signed at nightfall, and Paris, saved by Villars in 1712, and saved by the Convention amidst the Reign of Terror, had fallen before embattled Europe, while still under the rule of a Sovereign, who, twenty months before, had been Lord of the Continent.

While the Allies had thus been advancing on Paris, Napoleon had been making his way towards the Meuse. Ere long, however, he became aware that he was only observed by a body of cavalry; and he learned, by an accident, that Blücher and Schwartzenberg were marching on the capital in overwhelming force. He seems to have wished, for a few hours, to continue his daring movement eastwards; but he was overborne by frightened lieutenants; and the heads of his columns were turned back towards Paris. The conference with the Allies had ceased for some days; Caulaincourt had returned to his master, after a fruitless mission; and the Emperor, accompanied by his faithful minister, preceded the army, in haste, to obtain intelligence of what was occurring around the great city. He was informed of the capitulation by midnight on the 30th, at a village not far from Fontainebleau; and next morning he

despatched the Duke of Vicenza to the heads of the Coalition with full powers to treat. This, however, there is every reason to believe, was a stratagem to gain time and to enable the French army to approach Paris, for the known evidence points to but one conclusion.

Napoleon had steadily refused to accept the terms lately proposed by the Allies; the Bourbons, he had declared, might take the France of Louis XVI., but he would fight to the death for the "natural boundaries"; and it was his fixed purpose, in this particular, that had caused the recent negotiations to fail. On the other hand, the position of the Allies round Paris was such as to inspire a great captain with hope that genius and skill might yet do much, nay, perhaps, change the course of the war; and the errand of Caulaincourt, therefore, seems to have been essentially a military feint. The envoy of Napoleon, on entering Paris, was a witness of a revolution, sudden and complete, which, a few weeks before, would have been deemed incredible. Imperial authority having collapsed, Talleyrand and his knot of adherents, for some time corresponding secretly with the Allies, boldly seized the helm of the imperilled State; and it became their lot to treat with the conquerors for the interests of Paris, and even of France.

The Czar, who, owing to the memories of 1812, and to the preponderating strength of the Russian armies, had become the Suzerain of the Coalition, negotiated with men, already his satellites, and indeed the only representatives of France for the moment; and measures of supreme importance were

soon arranged. It was one of Talleyrand's distinctive merits that he interpreted clearly the signs of the time, and that any policy he counselled stood on a principle; he had little difficulty in proving to the Czar that the cause of Napoleon was wholly lost, and that France was weary of a rule of the sword, which had brought frightful disasters in its train; and he skilfully added, that, in the existing crisis, the restoration of the Bourbons was necessary to the world, for the Bourbons would gladly accept old France, and represented order, tradition, and the rights of kings. All that the Allies had seen had given weight to this judgment, their troops had defiled through the streets of the capital; scarcely a voice had uttered the name of the Emperor; the mass of the population had preserved silence; but bands of Royalist partisans had shouted loudly for "Louis XVIII. and the Ancient Monarchy," and these demonstrations had not been unwelcome. After a brief deliberation, the Coalition announced that they would not "treat with Napoleon or one of his family," leaving the question of the government of France unsettled, and all that was next required was to procure a kind of national assent to the will of the conquerors. Talleyrand found in the Senate, for many years, a mere tool in Napoleon's hands, a convenient agent to effect his purpose; and the prerogatives which the Emperor had bestowed on the body were made the means to compass his ruin. Some of the Senators had not forgotten the old opposition to the First Consul; others had chafed under an imperious master; many thought only of yielding to

events, and of securing profit and place for themselves, and all proved willing to lift up their heels against the prostrate lion for their own ends. The children of the Revolution did not belie their origin; loyalty and honour were dead in the land of Bayard; they proclaimed that Napoleon had forfeited his crown, and, with ineffable meanness, laid acts to his charge of arbitrary violence and despotic lawlessness, to which, one and all, they had been consenting.

Caulaincourt, who, probably, was not aware of his master's secret, but real purpose, and who sought to preserve the Empire at any cost, remonstrated against the decision of the Allies; but his remonstrances fell on unheeding ears. He had returned to Napoleon on the 2d of April, who had assembled his army around Fontainebleau, and who had eighty or ninety thousand men in his hands; for the troops who had fought with Marmont and Mortier had been permitted to rejoin the Emperor. Napoleon had resolved to attack the Allies; and he had planned operations which, to the last day of his life, he insisted would have given him decisive success. The armies of the Coalition were two hundred thousand strong; but sixty thousand were within Paris, and the rest of their forces spread round the city, disseminated upon a wide circumference, and divided by the lines of the Marne and the Seine. But Napoleon held the passages of both rivers; the citizens of Paris would not stand aloof if a French army should fall on their conquerors; and, outnumbered as he was, the Emperor believed that

he could crush one of the hostile masses by a well-conceived effort, that this would involve the fate of the other masses, and that the invaders, who occupied the city, would be certainly destroyed. It is vain to call the project insane, if we bear in mind what this great warrior repeatedly achieved against enormous odds; his triumph was very far from improbable; and, in any event, the resolve was noble, to risk everything in the cause of France.

Treating all that had occurred in Paris with scorn, Napoleon directed his marshals to prepare to march; and he looked joyfully forward to a great battle, which would enable him to insist on "the natural boundaries." But Talleyrand had played on the fears and the feelings of lieutenants weary of war, and desponding; the armed servitors of the Emperor let fall hints of disobedience, and of mutiny in the camp, and insinuated that Napoleon would do well to abdicate and to save his throne for Marie Louise and his son; and their master, seeing that they would not second his efforts, if he obstinately rejected what had been proposed, signed a Conditional Abdication on the terms they suggested, exclaiming at the same time, "we could win if we chose." Napoleon designated Ney, Macdonald, and Marmont to represent him before the Allies; and Ney and Macdonald at least sustained the cause of the young Empress and of the King of Rome—their own cause and that of the army—with earnestness, and sincere devotion. The Czar, who leaned to the liberal doctrines of the time, and had conceived a strong dislike to the Bourbons, was possibly not disinclined to yield; when an

unhappy incident changed the position of affairs, and finally determined the Allies' purpose.

Marmont, trusted and loved by Napoleon for years, had dealt with Schwartzenberg to betray his master; he had repented, like Judas, when it was too late, and had even gone to Paris with his brother marshals; but his subordinates carried out his previous intentions; his *corps d'armée*, twenty thousand strong, was marched into the camp of the Allies, and Napoleon's military position was fatally exposed. On receiving the intelligence, Alexander declared that the French army was evidently divided in mind; and Marie Louise and her son were pronounced impossible. Perceiving that the contest could not be prolonged, except by a desperate civil war, the fallen Emperor abdicated, without conditions, on the 6th of April, 1814.* He made no stipulations for himself and his House; but in language of singular grace and dignity, which evidently expressed his real thoughts, he declared that he laid down his crown, "and was ready to lay down life, if the sacrifice was for the welfare of France."

The conduct of Frenchmen, at this tremendous crisis, was a striking illustration of the qualities of the race, and of what Revolution and Despotism may effect. The provinces invaded by the allied armies were exasperated, and showed a patriotic spirit; the towns of the coast, blighted by the Continental system, rejoiced at the fall of the Imperial government.

* The abdication seems to have been signed on the 6th and ratified on the 11th.

The nation, however, as a whole, was apathetic, and listless; it was indifferent to the defence of the natal soil; and if it resented the wrongs of Napoleon's rule, its chief aspiration was a longing for repose. The attitude of Paris was very significant; though the capital, probably, in this instance, exaggerated the sentiments of the mass of the people. The Restoration of the Bourbons had been announced; the Comte d'Artois, brother of the late Pretender, soon to be proclaimed as Louis XVIII., who had followed in the wake of the Coalition, was about to assume the reins of power; and the abdication of Napoleon was an accomplished fact. In view of these great and sudden events, the population of the city seemed almost careless; they showed no enthusiasm for the new order of things, but they did not mourn for the vanished Empire; they felt nothing of the humiliation of defeat; they did not stand sternly aloof from their conquerors. On the other hand, the liberal and moneyed classes, the moderate men of all parties, and the representatives of the rising intellect of France, the orders of citizens, who had sustained Napoleon on the 18th Brumaire, and had rallied round him when First Consul, rejoiced at the termination of universal war, and believed that peace might bring liberty with it; and if they did not hail the Allies as deliverers, they did not regard them as foes of their country. The exultation of the survivors of the old *noblesse*, who had crowded the ante-chambers of the departed conqueror, was seen in exhibitions of half frantic delight; and marshals, generals, and ministers of the late Empire vied with

each other in hailing the rising sun, and in expiating obedience to a usurper, by lip-service to a king.

Alexander caressed and flattered them all; and amidst military displays, and festive pageants, Paris went on in her round of pleasure, and was gay, as is her wont, though in an invader's power. Yet these were not, perhaps, the worst signs of the selfishness and fickle levity of the hour. The fury of wounded national vanity, and the passions suppressed by despotic power, found a free vent in universal clamour against the great discrowned ruler of France. Napoleon's statue was torn down from the Column of Austerlitz; the tokens of his presence were everywhere effaced; and he became the mark of invectives, cruel and false, to which history affords no parallel. France, proud as she was of her renown in arms, had, doubtless, never felt real sympathy with Napoleon's system of European conquests; she had shown years before that she feared his ambition; and his reign had ended in immense disasters. But Napoleon had done her services above praise; she had made him an object of national worship; she had acquiesced in the whole course of his policy; and this moral prostration in the face of her enemies, the want of earnest and genuine feeling she exhibited in the hour of misfortune, and her ingratitude to her late great sovereign, point to inherent defects in the national character, and show what are the evil results of revolutionary excesses, and unchecked arbitrary power.

While Paris had been dallying with the Allies, and decking herself out for the Comte d'Artois, Napoleon

had remained, almost alone, at Fontainebleau. His army, spread around the spot, and the younger officers and the soldiery, gave repeated proofs of passionate devotion to a still worshipped chief. But the companions-in-arms he had raised to honour, had, on various pretexts, fallen away; of the dignitaries of his throne and the throng of his courtiers, not one had appeared to say farewell; three or four only of the leading men of the Empire waited on the voice of their fallen master, in a palace which had become a solitude.

Napoleon did not wholly yield to despair; but dark thoughts took possession of that deep-searching intellect. He had built an empire out of a revolutionary chaos; he had surrounded it with the pomp of the past, and had given it the glories of war and of peace; yet it had toppled down with an appalling crash; and he sat, like the Roman, amidst its ruins. He had raised France to the topmost height of grandeur; she had blessed him as her lord and her saviour, but she was now cursing him as a destroyer; and she was demanding at his hands the blood of thousands of her sons shed in the march of conquest from Madrid to Moscow. Not for him were the consolations of the life of home; he had been betrayed by kinsmen and friends; his foes had been those of his own household; his wife and child were now hostages in the power of enemies who felt the hatred of fear. Yet his first thoughts were of France in this hour of agony; he mourned with Caulaincourt on her departed greatness; he lamented that she had not seconded his efforts to maintain her place in

Europe; he grieved for the wrongs he felt he had done her. Forsaken, held up to the execration of mankind, and tormented by the reproaches of an accusing conscience, Napoleon felt existence an intolerable load, and, in a moment of weakness, he swallowed poison. The act indicates that this mighty spirit could not always rise superior to fortune; but Hannibal was, perhaps, even a greater man, and Hannibal had wrought his own destruction.

The noxious draught, however, did not prove fatal; and Napoleon was reserved for other destinies. The Allies had given him the island of Elba, and he was soon on his way to his new dominions. At Fontainebleau he bade a memorable farewell to the veterans of his Guard, which will live in history; and the war-worn soldiery wept like children, when he held their unconquered eagle in his embrace, and promised to "write the great deeds they had done together." On his journey he had ample and cruel experience of the mutability of human things, and of the Nemesis which dogs unbridled ambition. He was well received in the central parts of France; but as he approached the provinces which had most resented the Conscription and had not seen the enemy, and passed through the towns ruined by the Continental system, he was denounced by raving multitudes as a monster of crime, and his life was more than once in the gravest danger.

The exploits of Napoleon on the Marne and the Seine, justly rank among his most splendid achievements. Yet if we consider the contest of 1814 as a whole, we see that his calculations were often false;

he underrated the energy of his foes, and was surprised by them, in the first instance; he was not strong enough to contend for his lost Empire, and yet he evidently fought for large parts of it; he left Eugene in Italy, and Suchet in Spain, and did not concentrate his forces at the decisive points of the theatre of war, when this was still possible. The extravagance of the conqueror once more interfered with the strategy of the general, in this passage of arms; and we see in it, too, very clearly,* the over-confident eagerness which advancing years had rather increased than lessened. Craonne and Laon were worse than useless battles, and had a marked effect on the scene of events; and Napoleon in 1814 was not equal to the youthful warrior of 1796. As for the Allies, their operations were faulty and ill-conceived; they really accomplished less than Wellington, who drove Soult from the Adour to the Garonne, and paralysed the best army of France; and they conquered only by an immense superiority of force. Nevertheless, they knew they were no match for Napoleon; they gave proof of firmness and steadfast patience; and their triumph was complete, if for a time most doubtful.

The military side of these memorable events is, however, not their most important feature. The

* The opinion of Wellington on Napoleon in the campaign of 1814 will be found in the *Journals of Greville*, vol. i., 73. Wellington was an admirable military critic. "His last campaign (before the capture of Paris) was very brilliant, probably the ablest of all his performances." The Duke was of opinion that "if he had possessed greater patience, he would have succeeded in compelling the Allies to retreat."

energy of the Coalition, and of the hosts they led, and the ideas and principles that marched with them, contrast most strikingly with the moral apathy and indifference of France at this crisis of her fate, with the levity and frivolity seen in Paris, with the passions let loose against the fallen Emperor, with the baseness of the satellites who fell away from him. The national character, in some measure, accounts for these things; but they were more largely due to the ruinous effects of revolutionary passions and despotic power, and this is the real lesson taught by this period. The great superiority of Napoleon, over the men around him, is also, we think, made clearly manifest. Admit all that can be urged against the faults of his reign, the extravagance of his ambition, and the violence of his power; admit, too, that he was in the wrong, and even reckless, in trifling with the Coalition when they offered peace, still he stood almost alone in his fixed purpose to contend for what the great body of thoughtful Frenchmen believed to be essential to the national welfare, and it is vain to assert that his cause was hopeless. Nor was his conduct, as has been often said, dictated by mere self-deceiving egotism. Even after La Rothière he might have retained empire if he would only give up "the natural boundaries"; and he lost his crown in the quarrel of France. He had sinned against her, and had sinned against Europe; he paid the penalty in a tremendous fall; and his overgrown power could never have been lasting. But all through his reign Napoleon had had what he conceived to be the grandeur of France, at heart, mis-

taken as his conception of it was; he associated self with the national greatness; it was not merely, or even chiefly, for his own supposed interests, that he had overrun and vanquished the Continent. In the hour of his ruin the uncontrolled despot disappears in the heroic champion of France; he towers supreme over all other Frenchmen; he stands, separated from the low-minded rulers who look only to their own ends, and is placed among the great names of history.

CHAPTER XIII.

End of the war—Growing dislike to the Bourbons in France—The Congress of Vienna—Policy of Talleyrand—Discontent in France—Napoleon at Elba—His escape—His landing in France—Defection of the army and of Ney from the Bourbons—The Coalition denounces Napoleon as a public enemy—His preparations for war—State of opinion in France—The Hundred Days—The new Constitution—The Champ de Mai—Battles of Ligny, Quatre Bras, and Waterloo—Defeat of Napoleon—His second abdication—He embarks on the *Bellerophon* and is sent to St. Helena—Reflections.

WHEN leaving for Elba, Napoleon had said, "France will soon be relieved from foreign war, but she will have civil war, in six months, with the Bourbons." Events quickly verified a prediction which, perhaps, did not require peculiar insight. Carnot made a brilliant defence at Antwerp; Davoust stood out to the last at Hamburg; Soult fought an indecisive battle at Toulouse; Augereau crowned a feeble resistance in the South, by betraying his master with perfidious insolence;

but hostilities had soon ceased on the immense space between the Scheldt, the Seine, and the Adige.

It was otherwise in France, where the fallen monarchy, half forgotten for years, and strangely restored, had to confront the Revolution, and all that belonged to it. The Comte d'Artois had been greeted by the high life of Paris, and had eluded the conditions which the Senate had endeavoured to impose on the new Sovereign, and Louis XVIII. had of "his own free grace" bestowed a liberal Constitution on France, and had formed a government, in some measure, composed of eminent men of the Empire. Extraordinary moderation and wisdom, however, would have been required to give stability and durableness to this order of things; and the rule of the Bourbons showed none of these qualities. The King, indeed, was an able man, and, apart from his pretensions to his right divine, had some claims to rank as a statesman; and several of his ministers were adroit and experienced. But Louis XVIII. was swayed by a favourite, full of the ideas of the old *régime;* the Comte d'Artois was a tool of a little knot of *émigrés*, who "had learned, and had forgotten nothing"; and he had himself the traditions and the follies of the camp of Condé. Besides, the Government was beset by partisans demanding the rewards of past services, and by whole classes, which had suffered from revolutionary change, and thought that the hour of retribution had come; and ruined gentlemen clamoured for the restitution of lands torn from them in 1792–4, and hundreds of

exiles sought for offices in the State, if it "were only to keep disloyalty down."

A counter-revolution soon appeared at hand; it became so violent that extreme churchmen prayed for the abolition of the Concordat, and for the restoration of the old Church of France; and it was openly spread abroad that a few months would see the return of feudalism and of absolute monarchy. All the interests created by the Revolution, all the rights which had been established by it, were apparently, or really, placed in danger; the conformist clergy became the mark of insult; and especially the hundreds of thousands of peasants who had acquired the lands of the *émigrés*, sold by the State, were terrified at the prospect before them. The most anxious sign of the time, however, was seen in the attitude of the army. Soldiers had returned to France in multitudes, from fortresses which they had lately held, or as prisoners of war set free; and these retained, unchanged, their love for their Emperor, and heartily detested "the King of the foreigner." It probably was a necessity of State to disband these formidable and angry masses; but the measure was, not the less, one of extreme peril. In every other respect, besides, the military policy of the Government was unwise and hurtful. It flattered marshals and generals who had deserted their chief; but it had completely broken his old army up; it had taken from it its revered eagles; it forbade the Imperial Guard to approach the King; and it had committed the care of Louis XVIII. to a body of young nobles, who had never seen a battle, and whose

petulance affronted war-worn veterans bearing the honourable scars of many a well-fought field.

France, therefore, was vexed and alarmed at home; and the force which, in a revolutionary state, is almost the only support of Government, was turning decisively against the Bourbons. The nation, too, found many causes of discontent in the position it held as a vanquished Power, and in the settlement of the affairs of Europe, effected after the fall of Napoleon. It can hardly be said that the victorious Allies abused the rights of conquerors, as regards France; she was deprived, indeed, of her "natural boundaries"; but she remained the France of the later Bourbons, with frontiers enlarged at some points; she was subject to few of the exactions of war; and she was allowed to retain the trophies of art torn from plundered cities and taken off to Paris. Talleyrand, too, represented France most ably at the great Congress, which met at Vienna, to remodel the map of a changed continent. Upholding the principle of public right, against brute force and lawless ambition, he became the acknowledged champion of the Lesser States, and acquired extraordinary ascendency; and he succeeded in dividing the Coalition, and in uniting Austria, England, and France in a league against the voracious greed of Prussia, which sought to swallow Saxony up, and of the Czar, who tried to extend his empire to the Oder, on a hypocritical pretence of setting up a national kingdom of Poland. This policy raised France from her fallen state, and strongly promoted her best interests; and if Talleyrand, in a contest

with overwhelming force, was unable to accomplish all that he had wished, he proved himself to be* a worthy successor of the Sullys and Richelieus of the seventeenth century.

Considerations, however, like these, had little weight with the mass of Frenchmen. The nation bitterly resented the subordinate place it necessarily held among the great Powers; it saw real danger to its security, in the arrangement of the new order of Europe; and its ambition and pride were deeply wounded. France, but yesterday Queen of the Continent, beheld the spoils of her gigantic empire, divided among exulting enemies, and stood humbled amidst domineering rivals. She acquired only a strip of territory; England obtained possessions of first importance, Malta, the Cape of Good Hope, and the Isle of France; while Russia advanced in her march westward, Prussia received far more than all she had lost, Austria was made more powerful than she had ever been, regaining Lombardy and re-annexing Venice, while every trace of French power and influence was carefully effaced, as far as was possible; and it was but too evident, as was specially seen in the union of Belgium and Holland into a single state, that the European system, as it had been moulded, was designed to create barriers against French ambition. The balance of power, in a word, had been turned against France, in a decisive way; and thoughtful Frenchmen might reasonably com-

*Fresh and clear light is thrown on Talleyrand's conduct at Vienna, and, indeed, on the general proceedings of the Congress, in his *Memoirs* recently published.

plain that France had been reduced to a second-rate Power, surrounded by enemies with largely increased dominions. Yet what the nation, perhaps, most acutely felt, was the loss of its supremacy in arms; the Army of the Empire overawed the Continent; the Army of the Monarchy was the shadow of a name.

These events were not lost on the extraordinary man, who, from his island speck in the Mediterranean, contemplated the state of France and the Continent. For a short time after he had reached Elba, Napoleon had devoted his great faculties to the improvement and administration of his petty realm; and traditions still survive of what he accomplished. By degrees, however, the dream of Empire flitted again across that far-reaching mind, and in the growing discredit of the rule of the Bourbons, in the irritation and alarm prevailing in France, in the exasperation and passions of the French army, and in the division of the Allies at Vienna, he saw signs that he might reappear, a commanding figure on the stage of the world. Ere long he formed the most audacious of the projects of his marvellous life; he resolved to leave Elba, and to endeavour to regain the throne he had lost in the face of Europe. It is not true, as has often been said, that this was an unprovoked violation of public right; the government of Louis XVIII. had, in different ways, broken the treaty made on his abdication, and had refused him the funds they had promised to pay; and the question had been seriously raised at Vienna, of removing him from Elba to a safe place of banishment. He disposed of a small army of about one thousand men,

for the most part veterans of the Imperial Guard, and of a few insignificant vessels; and he set off, on his almost fabulous enterprise, on the 26th of February, 1815. The flotilla was seen by more than one war ship, and was delayed by calms and contrary winds; but treacherous Fortune beckoned on her favourite; and Napoleon moved on the Mediterranean wastes, in the serene confidence which, sixteen years before, he had exhibited on his return from Egypt. The expedition landed near Cannes on the 1st of March; the exile issued proclamations which, in impassioned language, called on France and the army to rally to his cause; and, in a few hours, the little band of invaders was in full march from the shores of Provence. Napoleon's movements gave proof of his wonted insight; he avoided the military stations of his old marshals, and the great cities along the coast; and he threaded his way, with extreme celerity, through the rugged defiles of the hills of Dauphiné, a province true to the Revolution, and attached to the Empire.

A single incident almost decided events; a regiment had been sent to stop the advancing column, but Napoleon bared his breast and asked, "Where is the man, who will draw a trigger against his father?" and the soldiery at the sight of their loved commander, broke from the ranks and gave him an enthusiastic greeting. The march of the exile, from this time, was like the spread of a mighty influence which nothing can resist. Regiment after regiment hastened to meet their Emperor; the lilies of the Bourbons were trampled in the dust; the tricolour

and the eagle appeared again; and in a few days Napoleon was at the head of an army growing apace in numbers. Grenoble was entered, and Lyons next; at that important city Napoleon declared the Bourbons fallen, and his throne restored; and he swept on through the plains of Burgundy, attended by thousands of the tillers of the soil, who saw in him the champion of their imperilled rights, and by multitudes mixing in joy with the troops. Ney, who had loyally intended to support the King, was carried away in the general revolt; and, as the Emperor advanced, the swelling tide of his adherents overthrew every obstacle, and effaced the vanishing traces of the prostrate monarchy. By the time he had reached the valley of the Seine, his army was more than twenty thousand strong, and he entered Paris on the 20th of March, the anniversary of the birth of the King of Rome, his "eagle," in his picturesque words, "having flown, from steeple to steeple, with the national flag, and lighted on the towers of Nôtre Dame." Louis XVIII. had, in vain, convoked the Chambers, which, under the new Constitution, represented France, and had made promises of large reforms; his authority disappeared in country and town; even in the capital there were few to say "God bless him"; and he fled over the frontier, his Body-Guard of nobles disbanding and fearing to cross swords with the horsemen, who watched the flight of their master.

Napoleon said that it was the happiest hour of his life, when his faithful adherents crowded round him, at the Tuileries, on this great occasion. The Empire was re-established in a few days; and the author of

this astonishing exploit boasted truly that it had not cost a single drop of blood. Yet he could scarcely have imagined that he was again to become the idol of an united people, and to renew the glorious days of the Consulate; he was separated by an impassable gulf from that period. The Revolution, which had restored him to the throne, was essentially due to a military revolt, and to the animosities and fears of great classes of Frenchmen, but the nation accepted him as a ruler, not so much because it wished him to rule, as because it disliked and dreaded the Bourbons. There was no stability, in fact, in French opinion. France, enervated by Revolution, Despotism, and War, and ever prone to run into extremes, rather seemed to welcome a strong master, as the alternative of a discredited Government, than loyally rallied around Napoleon; and the brief hour of enthusiasm soon passed away. The deep divisions in the structure of French society, the discords of classes, more than ever hostile, quickly reappeared with disastrous results; there were Royalist risings in the South and the West, the aspect of La Vendée became menacing; and, though civil war did not actually break out, the authority of the new Empire was greatly weakened. At the same time, the growing force of the Liberalism of France, which had not forgotten the despotism of the past, the moneyed orders, which had begun to feel that the Empire involved another contest with Europe, nay, the majority, perhaps, of enlightened Frenchmen, could not cordially support Napoleon: and, for different reasons, these powerful interests fell away from him, and became cold or unfriendly.

In a short time France presented the spectacle of a disunited and terrified nation, at the very moment when all its energies were required to uphold the Imperial government; and the prospect before it increased its disunion and fears. Napoleon, after his return from Elba, had offered to accept the France of 1814, to observe the treaties made with the Bourbons, nay, to acquiesce in what had been done at Vienna; and he had assured the Allies that his first thought was of peace. These overtures were, no doubt, sincere, but we can hardly wonder that they only provoked the scorn and distrust of his late conquerors, and it became soon apparent that Europe had resolved on another crusade against France, and the Empire. The discords of the Coalition ceased; the envoys of Napoleon were stopped at the frontier; his letters were intercepted, and treated with contempt, he was described as a public enemy, outside the pale of the law; and war, deadly and universal, was proclaimed against him. If Napoleon was justly deemed a disturber of the world, nay, if his ostracism was, in part, deserved, the extravagant fury, and the thirst for revenge, which this conduct of the Allies reveals, can be explained only by their passions and fears, and by their apprehensions for the spoils they had made their own; and the clemency shown by the Emperor to the Duc d'Angoulême, set free, though taken in arms against him, stands in marked contrast with the cruel spirit and vindictiveness of the heads of old Europe.

The efforts of Napoleon to guide the State, through this sea of troubles, were worthy of him; and, as

usual, he towered over all other Frenchmen. A Dictatorship was his real object, for this was a necessity of the time, and the nation, which had sanctioned his return to the throne, and had had ample proof of his genius in war, ought to have trusted him at this terrible crisis. The state of opinion, however, largely due to his faults in the past, made this impossible; and the Emperor gave a Constitution to France much more liberal than that of Louis XVIII., and ratified by a popular vote. The "Additional Act of the Empire," as it was called, was, nevertheless, an inauspicious name; it obtained comparatively few suffrages; it was generally regarded as a mere piece of the furniture of unchanged despotism, and it did not awake patriotism, or inspire confidence. The Upper House, under this scheme of polity, was chiefly composed of the *noblesse* of the Empire, who had proved what their loyalty was worth; and the Lower was an assembly of mere talkers, of Republicans of the Girondin type, of speculative men of new ideas, all more or less ill inclined to Napoleon. Such bodies were unfitted to support the Head of the State in a death struggle with incensed Europe; and what he thought of them may be gathered from his significant words, "Let us not imitate the Greeks of the Lower Empire, babbling about abstract theories, with the battering-ram at their gates."

Yet, though the situation seemed almost desperate, and France was divided, lukewarm, and, in part, hostile, Napoleon addressed himself to the task of contending against a world in arms, with some of the confidence of his better days; and, notwithstanding

increasing physical weakness, his genius, his energy, his unrivalled power of administration were made grandly manifest. He did not summon the nation to arms, true in this to his despotic instincts, and also because the appeal would have failed; nor did he make use, in the first instance, of the Conscription of 1815 in his hands, though he collected it as an ultimate reserve. But he turned to the very best advantage the ample and proved elements of military power, which, at this moment, abounded in France; and considering his position, the results were wonderful. The army was given its old organisation again; the regiments, the colours, the eagles were restored; and it was raised out of the state of impotence, in which it had been left under the fallen monarchy, by the addition of thousands of the trained soldiers, who had been disbanded by the late government, and of the flower of the National Guard. The exact figures will probably never be ascertained; but it appears certain that, in March, 1815, the army of France could not have mustered fifty thousand soldiers, ready for the field, whereas by the middle of June, it had one hundred and ninety thousand at least. This force was supported by two hundred thousand in reserve; and in a few months the armed strength of the State would have exceeded six hundred thousand men.* Meanwhile

* Owing to the vicissitudes of events in 1815, it is impossible to determine accurately the real state of the military forces of France between March and June in that year. The figures given by Napoleon, *Comment.*, tome v., 83, 95, ed. 1867, seem to exaggerate what he actually accomplished; those of Charras, tome i., 40, 47, are not

Paris and Lyons had been partly fortified; extraordinary exertions had been made to manufacture arms, to procure horses, and to prepare the material of war; and if we bear in mind what the condition of France was, the effort, as a whole, must be deemed gigantic, a marvellous example of organising skill. Of the one hundred and ninety thousand men, actually under arms, and forming his first available line, the Emperor had distributed about forty thousand to observe the eastern and southern frontiers; and he hoped to have one hundred and fifty thousand in his own hands, for the operations of the campaign he had planned.

The Champ de Mai, a solemn yet mournful pageant, at which, in the face of assembled Paris, Napoleon swore fealty to the Constitution and the Law, received deputations from the Departments of France, and gave the National and Imperial Guards their eagles, was remembered, for years, as his farewell to the nation. His military preparations were, for the time, complete, and he was ready for his last struggle with Europe. Had France been more loyal, and less divided, he would have awaited the Coalition on the Marne and the Seine with fortified Paris, an entrenched camp, in his rear; and if we recollect what he accomplished a year before, under conditions infinitely less promising, his success in 1815 would have been not improbable. This strategy, however, had

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trustworthy, and illustrate his systematic and unscrupulous detraction. Thiers carefully studied official, and innumerable other documents; his account is probably not far from the truth. See also Prince La Tour d'Auvergne's *Waterloo*, 20, 23.

become impossible; and he had conceived a plan of operations, altogether different, in which he saw hopes of splendid success.

The Allies had nearly a million of men under arms; their first line was fully five hundred thousand strong; but these gigantic arrays, intended to converge on the capital in their final movements, were widely divided, at immense distances; and at the extreme right of the vast front of invasion stood the two armies of Blücher and Wellington, disseminated over Belgium, and approaching the frontier. Napoleon had resolved to make a sudden spring on this detached array of the Coalition's forces, to endeavour to surprise and defeat it in detail; and he had hoped to employ the one hundred and fifty thousand men he had reserved for his command in person, in this daring but well-conceived enterprise. A sudden insurrection in La Vendée, however, deprived him of twenty thousand of these troops; and marred calculations, which, judging from events, would probably have assured him victory; but it was too late to pause, and draw back; and he set off from the capital, on the 12th of June. His army had been assembled with exquisite skill, drawn together from Lille and Metz, and to the South, from Paris; and, on the evening of the 14th, Napoleon was at the head of one hundred and twenty-eight thousand Frenchmen, including twenty-two thousand horse and three hundred and fifty guns, nearly concentrated on the edge of the frontier, where the Sambre approaches the old town of Charleroi. The advance began at daybreak on the 15th, the purpose of the Emperor being to cross the

Sambre, to occupy Charleroi and the adjoining country, and to hold Quatre Bras and Sombreffe in force, points on the great cross-road from Nivelles to Namur, which formed the main communication of the Allies, so that the success of this operation would, in a single march, place him between the armies of Blücher and Wellington, which, as we have seen, were widely scattered, and would give him an opportunity to strike both, when divided.

Napoleon did not accomplish all that he hoped; Ziethen, one of Blücher's lieutenants, checked the march of the French columns, with real skill; delays and misadventures occurred; but, if Quatre Bras and Sombreffe were not reached, the mass of the Imperial army, by nightfall on the 15th, was not far distant from both places, if a large fraction of it had not passed the Sambre; it had already drawn near the main line, by which its adversaries should unite; and it threatened their exposed and scattered forces. The Emperor had gained an immense advantage; and the conduct of his opponents, which he had foreseen, for he perfectly understood their distinctive qualities, had already placed them in grave peril. Blücher, daring and hasty, had reached Sombreffe, leaving at least a fourth of his army far off; Wellington, cautious and circumspect, and without experience of the extraordinary rapidity of his foe, had, when informed of Napoleon's advance, paused, hesitated, and lost precious hours*; and, when he had

* Attempts have been made to justify the strategy of Blücher and Wellington, especially of the last, on the 15th of June, but they do not bear examination. It is impossible to refute the irresistible logic

made up his mind at last to move, not far from midnight on the 15th, he had directed part of his army, not towards Quatre Bras, the spot whence he could reach his colleague at Sombreffe, but, considerably to the west, towards Enghien and Nivelles. A broad gap, therefore, was left open between the Prussian and British forces; Napoleon, even now near the road from Nivelles to Namur, had almost seized his adversaries' line of junction; and it had become probable in the extreme that they would be compelled to separate, and would even be defeated, one after the other, though their armies were nearly double the French in numbers.

The morning of the 16th found Napoleon's army in positions which well-nigh ensured success. The Emperor had not accurately ascertained the operations of Blücher and Wellington; and he expected that the Allies would not attempt "to unite under the guns of their enemy," but would retreat and open for him the way to Brussels, to the occupation of which he attached great importance. He directed Ney, almost on the spot, to advance from Frasnes, to seize Quatre Bras, with his left wing placed in the Marshal's hands, and to send a considerable detachment to Marbais, a village between Quatre Bras and Sombreffe; and had this grand manœuvre been ably

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of Napoleon, on the subject. *Commentaries*, tome v., 206, 207. ed. 1867. The Duke knew that he was out-generalled, and all but admitted this to the late Mr. Greville. *Journals*, vol. i., 40, ed. 1888. It is a tradition that Wellington exclaimed, when informed of Napoleon's advance, "The d——d fellow has gained twenty-four hours over me."

carried out, Blücher, at Sombreffe, would have been crushed and destroyed, and Wellington placed in extreme danger. The operation was not at all difficult; Ney had nine thousand good troops at Frasnes, and had more than thirty thousand in his immediate rear; Quatre Bras was held only by a weak division, sent forward without the Duke's knowledge; and, had Ney been the warrior of 1805–7, he could have accomplished a movement which, not improbably, would have changed, for a time, the fortunes of Europe. But Ney, like most of the French chiefs, had lost the confidence of the days of triumphs; he fought, too, with a halter round his neck, after his open desertion of the Bourbon cause; he was afraid to press forward, and he did not hasten the march of Reille and D'Erlon, his subordinates behind; and he failed to occupy Quatre Bras and Marbais, and to carry out the Emperor's orders. These delays gave Wellington just enough time to repair the grave mistakes of the 15th; his troops reached Quatre Bras, by degrees, in force; an indecisive combat took place; and Ney ultimately fell back on Frasnes, having not even approached Sombreffe, though he had prevented Wellington from joining hands with Blücher.

Meanwhile Napoleon had attacked the Prussian army, assembled around Sombreffe, with his centre and right; and the battle raged furiously for several hours, the strength of the contending forces being not far from equal, and the superiority of the tactics of the French being very apparent. The Emperor waited, for a time, expecting the advance of Ney's

division from Marbais, which would have placed a considerable force on the rear of Blücher, and made the 16th of June a second Jena; but seeing that the movement was not being made, he devised another plan to overwhelm his enemy. He sent a message to D'Erlon, still behind Ney, to march upon St. Amand, on the right flank of Blücher, who, at the same time, was to be attacked in front; and once more the audacious Prussian chief was in a situation of extreme peril. This admirable manœuvre, however, failed: D'Erlon advanced slowly and in the wrong direction,* and when he had approached St. Amand at last, he was recalled by Ney, now hard pressed by Wellington, Napoleon, probably, at least consenting. † D'Erlon, therefore, did nothing on this eventful day; his twenty thousand men were completely useless; and the indecision of Ney, and a series of mistakes, preserved the Allies from an immense disaster. Yet Napoleon was far from altogether foiled; he broke the centre of Blücher, at Ligny, and drove the Prussians in defeat from the field, with a loss of nearly a third of their numbers, the losses of the French being comparatively small.

* Napoleon's message to D'Erlon was probably addressed to Ney, but was sent by one of Napoleon's most trusted aid-de-camps with directions to show it to D'Erlon, and to arrange the intended movement with that general.

† The operations of D'Erlon on the 16th of June have given rise to endless controversy, for his failure saved Blücher, and had a decisive effect on the final issue of the contest. This important subject cannot be discussed here; the reader may consult Thiers on *Waterloo;* Charras, tome i., 170; La Tour d'Auvergne's *Waterloo*, 169, and there are many other authorities.

Napoleon had not gained, on the 16th of June, the success which might have been easily won. But for the weakness of Ney, and the mistakes about D'Erlon, Blücher certainly would have been routed at Ligny; and, in that event, Wellington could hardly have escaped a disaster. The strategy of the Allies, in a word, was bad; that of the Emperor was perfect in design; and a great triumph was only just missed. But, if the swoop of his eagle had not been fatal, Napoleon had still a marked advantage; he had inflicted a heavy defeat on the Prussian army; the Duke had been kept apart from his colleague; the French, after Ligny, were in full possession of the true line of communication of their foes, the great road from Nivelles to Namur; and the Allies were forced back into a difficult country, the hills, forests, and lowlands watered by the Dyle. It would not be easy for them, therefore, to effect their junction; and if they did not fall back on their respective bases, and did resolve to try to unite, the course they ought to have followed can be hardly doubtful.

Blücher, beaten at Ligny, should without delay have marched to join Wellington by the nearest line, that is, on Quatre Bras, Genappe, or Waterloo; or both commanders ought to have moved on Brussels, concentrating their united forces; in which event they could have opposed two hundred thousand to one hundred thousand men, and would have outmanœuvred their great antagonist. The allied generals followed a different plan, and, once more, exposed themselves to defeat. Blücher, probably because he wished to rally the part of his forces,

which had not fought at Ligny, within the shortest possible time, retreated, with his shattered columns, on Wavre. Wellington, probably because he had chosen the spot as a position for a great defensive battle, fell back from Quatre Bras, on Waterloo; and the two chiefs agreed to unite on this second line, and to await, on it, the attack of Napoleon. It was most unlikely, however, that they could join hands; and their separate retreat involved the greatest dangers. Napoleon was within reach of both, with his victorious army; Wavre was nearly a march from Waterloo, and was divided from it by a most intricate country; the movements of the Allies could not be concealed; and the chances were that they would remain divided, and be defeated in quick succession. The Emperor, on the 17th of June, might have called on his troops to make a great effort, and have fallen either on Blücher or on Wellington, retreating and unable to assist each other; and had he done this, he must have gained a victory. Two other operations, besides, were open to him; he might have united nearly all his forces, and attacked Blücher at Wavre, or the Duke at Waterloo, on the 18th, before they could unite; or, finally, in accordance with true strategy he might have sent off a detachment to hold Blücher in check, completely preventing his joining Wellington, and have assailed the British chief with three fourths of his army; and in either instance, he must have been successful. In the presence, therefore, of such a man as Napoleon* the march on

* German and English writers have tried hard to justify the divided march of Blücher and Wellington on Wavre and Waterloo; but had

Wavre and Waterloo was a false movement, and the General of 1796 would have made it fatal.*

Events, however, occurring in the camp of the French, combined to favour the projects of the Allies, and saved them from what might have been ruin. Napoleon's health, we have seen, had been long in decay; he went to Fleurus, in his rear, on the night of the 16th; and he was so unwell on the morning of the 17th, that he was unable to issue a single order.† Meanwhile, his lieutenants on the spot, trained to mere obedience, took no step, to follow, or to observe their enemies. Ney, on the left, remained at Quatre Bras inactive; Soult, the chief of the staff, did simply nothing; and Grouchy, in command of Napoleon's

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they not been vindicated by the event—no justification at all—they would not have found a hearing. No answer has been, or ever will be made, to Napoleon's remarks, which carry conviction to minds not bewildered by success. *Comment.*, tome v., 510. Ed. 1867. This irrefutable criticism should be carefully studied.

* Charras, who praises the Allies, because he hated Napoleon, does not, in so many words, condemn the march on Wavre and Waterloo; he approves of it indeed, in one passage; but he points out the ruinous consequences which might have followed. Tome i., 203, ii., 128. Clausewitz, indeed, and Colonel Chesney and General Shaw Kennedy are by implication nearly of the same opinion. The comments of Clausewitz, a German, but a great military writer, are very significant.

† The evidence of the state of Napoleon's health, a most important factor in the events of the campaign of 1815, is well summed up by Dorsey Gardner in his useful volume on Waterloo, p. 36. How ill Napoleon was on the 17th appears from the following: "In the evening of the 16th he went to bed immediately after the close of the battle of Ligny, and was in such a condition that none of his staff dared enter his chamber . . . On the morning of the 17th, there was the same impossibility of getting access to him to receive orders that ought to have gone out at daybreak."

right, sent a few horsemen towards Namur, in the wrong direction. Blücher slowly marched on his way to Wavre, no hostile cavalry hanging on his track; and Wellington fell back from Quatre Bras to Waterloo, on the morning of the 17th, unmolested by Ney. The Emperor had returned to Ligny before noon; his first intention was to give a day's rest to his troops weaied with marching and fighting; and the reason was that, with wonted confidence, he believed Blücher's army was utterly routed; that it was recoiling upon its base towards the Rhine, and that there would be time to turn against and to overpower Wellington. On learning, however, that a considerable part of the Duke's army was still at Quatre Bras, he resolved to join hands with Ney and attack it, his hope being that he might bring his enemy to bay, and beat him in detail, while far away from Blücher.

The Imperial army was divided into two groups, the one composed of the centre and left, about seventy-two thousand strong, and designed, in Napoleon's hands, to assail Wellington; the other, some thirty-four thousand men, a restraining wing, to hold Blücher in check. The Emperor entrusted this wing to Grouchy; he directed him to pursue and keep back the Prussians; he added that he would attack Wellington, should that general stand before the forest of Soignies, a great wood between Waterloo and Brussels; and he made the Marshal aware that his mission was to interpose between Blücher and Wellington, and effectually to prevent their junction. This strategy was perfectly

correct in principle; it was in accordance with grand precedents repeatedly seen in Napoleon's career; but a great opportunity had been lost; invaluable hours had been thrown away; Blücher had made his escape, and was leagues distant; the army of Wellington was quite safe; and already it was no easy task to carry out, with success, the Emperor's orders.*

Napoleon reached Quatre Bras in the early afternoon; but Wellington had by this time assembled the great mass of his army at Waterloo; the French only harassed a rear-guard in retreat, and a tempest of rain that broke over the country made military operations almost useless. As evening fell, the heads of the Emperor's columns reached the low hills near La Belle Alliance, in front of the uplands that lead to Waterloo; and the fire of many batteries gave Napoleon warning that a large army was in position before him.

We turn from the Emperor, to Grouchy and his wing, detached, we have seen, to follow up Blücher. Napoleon had continued to believe that the Prussians were falling back towards the Rhine; but, on his way from Ligny to Quatre Bras, he had ascertained that a Prussian force had been seen on the Orneau, one of the Sambre's feeders; and he sent a message to Grouchy, directing the Marshal, to advance to Gembloux, a small town on the stream,

* Jomini is an invaluable authority on Napoleon, for he knew more about him than any other commentator. He seems to have been unaware of the state of the Emperor's health in 1815; but he was forcibly struck by the delays of the 17th June. *Précis de la Campagne de 1815*, 185. "Ce nouveau temps perdu sera toujours une chose inexplicable de la part de Napoléon."

about thirteen or fourteen miles from Wavre. Gembloux was not the best position for the restraining wing; but, despite all that detractors have urged, these arrangements of the Emperor were sufficiently correct to have enabled Grouchy to fulfil his mission, had he been an active and capable chief. The Marshal reached Gembloux before nightfall on the 17th; his army, however, had not come into line, the weather was so severe, until some hours afterwards; and, it appears certain, that for some time he was not made acquainted with the direction taken by the Prussians in their retreat on Wavre.

During the night, however, and before daybreak, he received intelligence, which, if not accurate, ought to have made his purpose for the 18th fixed; and he wrote to Napoleon to the effect that the Prussians had retired in two main columns, the one on Wavre, the other towards Liège—that is, towards its base on the Rhine; that a third column was on the way to Namur; that he would march by Sart-les-Walhain on the enemy's track; and that "if the great body of the Prussians had fallen back on Wavre he would pursue it, in that direction, in order to separate Blücher from Wellington."

These despatches prove that Grouchy understood his task—that is, to keep the allied commanders apart; and the knowledge he had acquired ought to have made him resolve to move at daybreak from Gembloux towards Wavre, and to hold any enemy, at that place, in check, for a Prussian column retreating on Liège was out of the account, and need not be noticed, whereas a Prussian column, which had

reached Wavre, was not far from Wellington, and might join him. This was the more essential because Grouchy knew that the Emperor intended to attack the Duke, should he offer battle before the forest of Soignies, a few miles distant only from Wavre; and, also, because the Marshal's letters were calculated to assure Napoleon that he had nothing to fear from Blücher on the 18th. The Marshal's duty, therefore, was plain and simple; and when his master had received his first message, Napoleon believed that he was safe from a Prussian attack, and thought only of bringing Wellington to bay. Yet he did not neglect to send cavalry to reconnoitre nearly as far as Wavre; and it is at least doubtful * if he did not order Grouchy, during the night of the 17th, to draw near Waterloo, and to send a detachment to fall on the flank of the Duke. Napoleon, as the situation appeared to him, felt confident of a decisive victory on the 18th.

The Allies, meanwhile, had their arrangements made for meeting the Emperor's attack at Waterloo. Wellington had assembled about seventy thousand men, drawn together from Quatre Bras, Nivelles, and other points, to fight in a position, he had, we have seen, chosen; but his army was very inferior to that of his enemy, being largely composed of mere auxiliaries, who had served, too, under the Imperial

* This is one of the most obscure passages of the campaign of 1815. The reasons for the opposite views on the subject will be found in Thiers on Waterloo, and in Charras, tome ii., 126. The *Memoires de General Marbot*, just published, tome iii., 404, certainly indicate that the order was given to Grouchy. The movement, it should be added, was in Napoleon's manner.

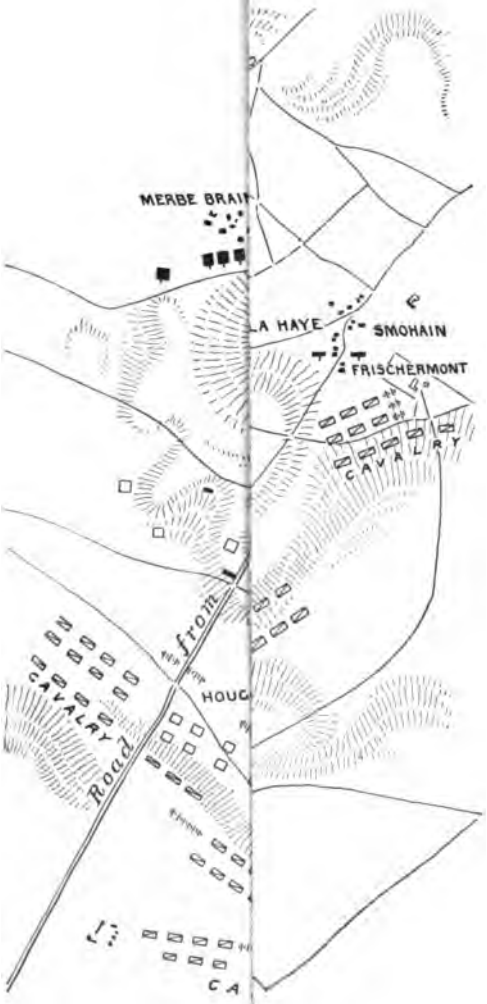
eagles. He might have considerably increased this force, but he had left seventeen thousand men, far off to his right, at Hal; and a strategic error, which cannot be excused, was destined to place him in grave danger. On the other side of the field of manœuvre, Blücher had had his army for many hours at Wavre; he had been joined by Bülow with thirty thousand men, who had not been able to reach Sombreffe; his troops had had rest, and were well supplied, and he was at the head of ninety thousand men, burning to avenge their late defeat. The purpose of the veteran, who though hurt at Ligny, rose superior to pain, and had the ardour of youth, was to march from Wavre, on Waterloo, on the 18th; to effect his junction, on the field, with Wellington; and to overwhelm Napoleon, with their united forces, enormously superior to the French in numbers. He had pledged his word to that effect to the Duke; the British general, indeed, would not have attempted to stand at Waterloo, without this pledge, and no doubt can exist that he was convinced the Prussian army would be in line, by the forenoon of the 18th of June.

The allied commanders, therefore, had resolved to await the onset of Napoleon, in the first instance, with Wellington, standing alone with an inferior army, and, on the assumption, in the second instance, that Blücher would reach Waterloo, in a short time, from Wavre; and they reckoned on victory, on the supposition, that their forces would unite during the course of the battle. The event justified these calculations; but they were ill founded, and might have

proved fatal. In the first place, the Allies believed that nearly the whole French army was before Waterloo, on the morning of the 18th; they argued, therefore, that Wellington, with seventy thousand men, of whom about forty thousand were good troops, would hold his ground against Napoleon, with perhaps ninety thousand or even one hundred thousand for some hours; and this reasoning was a palpable error. In the second place, Blücher had underrated the difficulty of the march from Wavre to Waterloo, through a country bristling with all kinds of obstacles, and had expected to reach his colleague much sooner than was actually the case; and this was a mistake that was well-nigh ruinous. And in the third place, most important of all, the allied generals seem to have believed that Blücher would be able to complete his march, without serious molestation on the part of the French; in other words that Napoleon, false to the strategy he had illustrated by a hundred examples, would have neglected to employ a restraining wing, strong enough to keep the Prussians in check, and to make it sure that they would not join Wellington. The combinations of Blücher and Wellington, it has been truly said, made the defeat of either, on the 18th, a likely event; and, in truth, the false movement on Wavre and Waterloo was still producing injurious results.

Napoleon had intended to attack Wellington* at

* This is proved from official documents by Prince La Tour d'Auvergne's *Waterloo*, 251, and disposes of the charges of Charras who condemns the lateness of Napoleon's attack. The delay was an immense accidental advantage to Wellington.


MERBE BRAI
A HAYE
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FRISCHERMONT
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nine in the morning of the 18th of June, but the torrents of rain that had hardly ceased to fall, had made the ground difficult for manœuvring; and at the instance of Drouot, one of his best officers, the Emperor deferred the attack until near noon. The battle began by a feint against Wellington's right, and the divisions of Reille pressed onward boldly, to storm Hougoumont, a strong and well-guarded outpost. Before long the batteries of Ney, massed in a long line in front of the outpost of La Hayé Sainte, gave presage of the Emperor's real purpose, when an unexpected and alarming accident occurred. Part of the corps of Bülow was descried on the extreme French right; it was ascertained that the Prussians were at hand, in force, and no sign of Grouchy appeared; so Napoleon was compelled to detach Lobau, with about ten thousand men to hold Bülow in check; and a message was despatched by Soult to summon Grouchy to the field. Meanwhile Ney had begun the grand attack; the corps of D'Erlon advanced to turn the British left, and to force its centre, but the formation of the French columns was dense and vicious; their onset failed after a fierce struggle; and a magnificent charge of the heavy British cavalry, though ultimately repulsed, had a terrible effect.

The Emperor's first great effort had thus been baffled; and the prospect around him had begun to darken, for Bülow was making his presence felt; Lobau, utterly outnumbered, was falling back; and nothing whatever had been heard of Grouchy, who, evidently, had not stopped his immediate enemy.

Napoleon abandoned the attack on Wellington's left, which would have imperilled his own right, Bülow being at hand; he turned fiercely against the British centre; and, at about* four in the afternoon, La Haye Sainte was captured. A gap was now opened in Wellington's defence; a mass of French cavalry reached the main British position, and swept away thousands of the weak auxiliaries; and Napoleon intended, it appears certain, to follow up this success, by an attack of the Guard. The situation of Wellington had become critical; but Blücher, by this time had joined Bülow; and the daring veteran ordered his lieutenant, at all hazards, to fall on Napoleon's right flank. The onset of the Prussians was well sustained; the Emperor suspended the movement of the Guard; and, indeed, Bülow made such alarming progress, that a large part of the Guard was required to stop him. Ney, meanwhile, had been making furious efforts to break Wellington's centre with the French horsemen; he engaged them almost to the last man; but nothing could shake the British and German squares, which stood "rooted," it was said, "in the earth"; and the proud squadrons, not supported by foot, were compelled at last to recoil, beaten.

The battle, however, was not decided; Bülow had been repulsed by seven in the afternoon, and Wellington's army had been so stricken, so wasted by death, desertion, and flight, that it seemed unequal to a great final effort. Napoleon formed the Imperial

* General Shaw Kennedy makes the time much later; but he is contradicted by innumerable authorities.

BRAINE
LE LEUD
NIVELLES

Guard into two great columns; and keeping one back as a necessary reserve, directed the other, with the wrecks of his remaining forces, against the imperilled centre of his foe. The Duke, however, had strengthened the menaced point; and though, doubtless, he felt how wrong he had been in leaving a great detachment at Hal, as he looked on his thinned and diminished line, his admirable constancy never gave way, and he had still a reserve for the decisive moment. The attack of the Guard was, for a time, most weighty; but it was repulsed at last, and the defeated column fell slowly back to join its reserve. Just at this moment, a tremendous change passed suddenly over the whole scene. Parts of the corps of Ziethen and Pirch made their way to the field; a mass of British cavalry was let loose; and Wellington moved forward his shattered army, a few hundred yards, to prove that he had won the battle. Bülow, Ziethen, and Pirch pursued the French, and turned a retreat into a hideous rout; and, in three or four hours, the noble host of Napoleon was a fugitive horde flying towards the Sambre.

On this terrible day Napoleon was again unwell*; and though the plan of his attack, on his last field, was perfect, he showed none of the vigour of Jena and Austerlitz. The tactics of his lieutenants, too, were bad; they exhibited impatience and want of caution; and Ney, the hot fit succeeding the cold, threw away recklessly his master's cavalry. On the other hand, Wellington was the soul of the defence; he expected Blücher, we have seen, at an early hour,

* Dorsey Gardner, *Waterloo*, 36.

and yet he successfully resisted his much more powerful enemy, though he received no assistance from the Prussians until five in the afternoon. Still the result of Waterloo was due to deeper causes; and the ruin of the Emperor, and the triumph of the Allies, must be chiefly ascribed to the conduct of Grouchy. The evident duty of the Marshal, we have said, was to have left Gembloux at daybreak on the 18th of June; and he should have made for Wavre, as quickly as possible, to stop the Prussians if they were at that place. His best course obviously, too, would have been to cross the Dyle, and to draw near Napoleon, while taking care to approach Wavre, for in this way, he would reach the flank of his foes, on the assumption that they were on the march towards Waterloo, and he would be in a position to support the Emperor. The task required boldness, insight, and energy; but it was not beyond the powers of a good soldier; and had Grouchy done what the occasion required, he would,* it is morally certain, have intercepted Blücher, and not a Prussian division would have fought at Waterloo.

The Marshal, however, neglected his duty; he did not leave Gembloux until eight or nine in the morning; he marched towards Wavre in one huge column, retarding the march by several hours; he never thought of crossing the Dyle; and when he heard at Sart-les-Walhain the thunder of Waterloo he rejected the admirable advice of Gérard to hasten over the

* Jomini, *Précis de la Campagne de 1815*, 261. The opinion of Jomini on this question outweighs that of all later commentators.

Dyle, and to move on Waterloo. The result of this fatal weakness and delay was that Blücher was not molested on his march from Wavre, and yet the difficulties and obstacles in his way were so great, that Bülow did not reach Napoleon until five in the afternoon, and that Ziethen and Pirch were not in line with Wellington, until between eight and nine. The advancing Prussians, too, did not expect an attack, and were separated into long straggling columns; and had an enemy, therefore, appeared on their flank, they would not only have been in great danger, but they would have lost hours in drawing together, and they could not have been at Waterloo in time. Had Grouchy, then, left Gembloux, at three or four in the morning, and crossed the Dyle at the bridges of Moustiers and Ottignies, Blücher, hero as he was, would not have joined Wellington; and Napoleon would have defeated his much weaker foe. The same result, the Emperor believed, would have followed had Grouchy only broken up in time, and marched from Gembloux to Wavre, without crossing the Dyle; and events of the 18th point to this conclusion. Grouchy had approached Wavre by one in the afternoon; his apparition checked the march of the Prussians; and of an army of ninety thousand men, not fifty thousand made their way to Waterloo. Even if Grouchy, at the eleventh hour, had followed the excellent counsels of Gérard, he might have kept Ziethen and Pirch back, and have conjured away a complete catastrophe. Excuses have been made for the Marshal, in vain; it was due to him that Napoleon succumbed, and that Blücher was enabled to join Wellington, and to secure the

Allies victory. This incapable soldier,* in fact, marred the combinations of his great master, and assisted the faulty combinations of his foes.

Napoleon hastened to Paris, after the rout of Waterloo, in order to make an appeal to the Chambers, and, if possible, to repair a crushing disaster. This conduct has been denounced by detractors; but his presence at the seat of government was a necessity of state; and, for the moment, he had no army to rally. He wished the Chambers to make him a Dictator for the time, and this was the only hope of safety for France, if indeed, she could be saved from the hosts of her enemies. These bodies, however, never friendly to him, and panic-stricken after his late defeat, insisted on his abdication, with thoughtless passion; and though his brother Lucien, the former President of the Five Hundred, on the 18th Brumaire, who had been lately reconciled to him, entreated him to seize the reins of power, Napoleon, after some hesitation, refused. It may be that, on this, as on other occasions, the Emperor was not equal to himself, when brought face to face with the extreme of misfortune; it may be, too, that, as fifteen years before, a National Assembly and its moral influence inspired him with a kind of awe; but more probably he felt, as he has recorded, that if he made himself Dictator, civil war would

* Grouchy, too, failed at Bantry Bay in 1796, and probably prevented Ireland from becoming a French province. His name is still a byeword for incapacity among the Irish peasantry. Not long ago I tried a case, in which the password of the conspirators was, "Let there be no Grouchys among you."

follow, and civil war would have involved the national ruin.

Napoleon announced his abdication in the dignified words he knew how to use on great occasions, and proclaimed his son Napoleon II., but the Empire perished with its restorer's fall; and a provisional government was named by the Chambers. The discrowned ruler of France retired to Malmaison, the favourite abode of his lost Joséphine; and, as at Fontainebleau the year before, he was forsaken, and held up to execration and contempt. His thoughts, however, were still with France; the allied armies had approached Paris; Blücher had pressed forward in advance of Wellington; and Napoleon offered to attack their divided forces, at the head of the troops gathered around the capital, pledging his word that he would resign his command, after winning a victory he considered certain. The offer was made at the peril of his life, for it rendered his chance of escaping from France most doubtful; but it was rejected by the suspicious men in power; and the fallen Emperor took his departure for the coast in the hope of reaching the shores of America. Various projects for the voyage were discussed at Rochefort, but it was deemed impossible to elude the British cruisers; and on the 15th of July, 1815, Napoleon placed himself under the flag of England, and was received on board the *Bellerophon* with high honours, having just written a letter to the Prince Regent, announcing, in touching and noble language, that he "committed himself to the protection of the laws of the most powerful, the most persevering, and the most generous of his foes."

But the Coalition had him in its grasp, and Napoleon pleaded in vain that "like Themistocles he had come to sit at the hearth of the British people." He was a few days at Torbay and Plymouth; the sentence of England was soon pronounced; he was to be sent to St. Helena, a close prisoner, with circumstances of humiliation degrading and needless. A dignified protest was disregarded, and by the second week of August the great exile was on his way to the last scene of his history.

It is unnecessary to dwell on the events which took place after France had lost her mighty defender. The Chambers were hostile to the Bourbons, and the provisional government was largely composed of Regicides. But both became the dupes and the instruments of a venal intriguer of the basest kind, who had betrayed Napoleon and Louis XVIII., and who sought, in the existing confusion, to play the part played by Talleyrand in 1814. Fouché, the real head of the State, for the moment, professed intense patriotic zeal, and his determination to defend the capital; but he had long been in communication with the Allies; he persuaded the military chiefs on the spot that the Coalition could not be resisted; he checked all exhibitions of popular feeling; and, as was said, "he drugged everyone to make way for the Bourbons." Events strongly favoured this policy of deceit; nothing but Napoleon and the energy of 1793 could, in existing circumstances, have rescued France; and, in the absence of both, her cause was hopeless. In a short time Louis XVIII. was on the throne again, and, the

Chambers, which had overthrown the Emperor, had disappeared, mere phantoms of folly and weakness.

The Hundred Days, as Napoleon's second reign was called, form a dark page in the annals of Europe. The variableness of Frenchmen in throwing off the Bourbons, in accepting Napoleon with seeming delight, and in falling away from him, even before Waterloo, reveal the defects of the national character, and indicate, as in 1814, what are the fruits of Revolution and of arbitrary power; and the abandonment of the Emperor, in the hour of defeat, was an exhibition of unwise weakness. The Allies, too, must be condemned by history; admitting they had a right to go to war with Napoleon, they had no right to denounce him as a kind of pirate; admitting they had a right to deprive him of liberty, they had no right to subject him to insult and wrong; and St. Helena is a blot on the fair fame of England.

The military events of this brief period are those which give it its chief interest. An impartial judgment on the campaign of 1815, after the lapse of years, ought not to be difficult. Bellona is justified in her children; and the superiority of Napoleon in the great combinations of war was distinctly manifest throughout the contest. With his tendency to over-confidence, indeed, he certainly fell into one grave error; he thought that Blücher, after Ligny, was falling back on the Rhine; but this was not a principal cause of the result. The state of his health, too, told greatly against him; this led to the fatal delays of the 17th and contributed to the bad tactics of the French at Waterloo; and possibly he

showed, on one or two occasions, that he had lost his perfect confidence in himself. But the extravagance of the conqueror does not appear; and the genius of the strategist was grandly displayed. His comprehension of the situation as a whole, his selection of the decisive points on the theatre, his admirable skill in assembling his forces, his power of stratagem, his scientific method of attack, were exhibited almost in the highest perfection. He outmanœuvred his enemies on the 15th; all but checkmated them the next day; and, but for the faults of Grouchy, would have gained Waterloo. This was done, too, though he had only one hundred and twenty-eight thousand men to oppose to two hundred and twenty-four thousand; and though, whatever has been confidently said, his army at Waterloo was not the old Grand Army. His instruments, however, failed in his hands; Ney and D'Erlon were unequal to their tasks, on the 16th; Grouchy on the 18th was worse than useless; and his lieutenants really caused the loss of the campaign.

Blücher and Wellington, on the other hand, showed badly as strategists, from first to last; and, strategically were unfit to cope with Napoleon. They were nearly surprised and wholly out-generalled, in the early operations of the campaign; Blücher exposed himself to crushing defeat at Ligny; the delays of Wellington were perilous in the extreme; the double retreat on Wavre and Waterloo gave their adversary a chance missed by accident only; they fought Waterloo on assumptions which would have caused their defeat, but for the extraordinary

Wellington

(*Siborne's "History of the Waterloo Campaign."*)

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remissness of Grouchy. Yet as soldiers, justice should be done to both; and they deserved their triumph for the great qualities they displayed. Blücher proved himself to be a hero in conquering defeat, and in rallying his army after Ligny; Wellington exhibited real genius in defence, and most admirable constancy on the great day of Waterloo; and no other chiefs of the Coalition can be compared to them. Some of the minor causes of the defeat of Napoleon ought not, moreover, to be kept out of sight. The Emperor's army was too small; one hundred and twenty-eight thousand men could with difficulty be opposed to two hundred and twenty-four thousand; and sufficient allowance could not be made for accidents. Napoleon, too, underrated the moral power and energy of the Prussian army of 1815; and this led him to believe that, after Ligny, it was out of the account for some days, an error which Grouchy might have rectified, but which was not the less an error. The Emperor, besides, there are grounds to believe, did not understand the strength of the British infantry; he launched his cavalry against it too freely, after La Haye Sainte had fallen into his hands; and he himself attributed the loss of Waterloo, in some measure, to this unyielding constancy.*

* *Correspondance*, tome xxxi., 240: "Les Français, quoique si inferieurs en nombre auraient remporté la victoire; et ce ne fut que la bravoure obstinée et indomptable des troupes Anglaises seules qui les en a empêchée."

CHAPTER XIV.

Policy and conduct of the Allies after Waterloo—Napoleon at St. Helena—The indignities he suffered—Sir Hudson Lowe—Napoleon's writings—The last years of his captivity—His fatal illness and death—His will—His remains are moved ultimately to France—Reflections on his career as a warrior, a ruler, and in private life—Conclusion.

FTER Waterloo, and the return of the Bourbons, the Allies sated their revenge on France and their enemies. Blücher certainly would have shot Napoleon, had the discrowned Emperor fallen into his hands; he passionately wished to sack Paris; he did his best to destroy the bridge which commemorates the defeat of Jena. Louis XVIII., probably against his will, was carried away by the *émigré* faction; under the pretence of a deep-laid plot in the army, the reality being the faults of the government, an odious proscription was set on foot; Ney was immolated in defiance of a solemn compact, which had enabled the King to enter the capital; and a Royalist White Terror reigned in the

provinces. France, too, paid the penalty of weakness and levity; she lost part of her frontiers of 1814; she was trampled under foot by the hosts of Europe; she was occupied, for three years, by a foreign army; but for the jealousies of the Coalition, she would have been deprived of Alsace and Lorraine, the trophies of conquest torn from her in 1870–71. The one personage, indeed, among the allied leaders, who did not lose his head, was the calm-minded Wellington; he has been condemned for not saving Ney; but if this was a mistake, it was a mistake due to a characteristic, and excellent quality—a dislike to meddle with what concerned others.

The destiny of Napoleon was not a sudden death of violence, like that of more than one of his companions in arms; but it was scarcely less cruel, and it was more lamentable. The Allies confirmed the doom pronounced by England; and England, his * great and invincible enemy, consented to become the gaoler of the fallen conqueror, on behalf of the still affrighted kings, who had grovelled at his feet. Napoleon reached St. Helena in the autumn of 1815; and he soon learned what his fate was to be in exile. His sword—the sword of Rivoli, of Jena, of Austerlitz—had been already demanded of him, though the outrageous demand was not pressed; and he had been

* Napoleon felt from first to last that England was the real head of the Coalition against France, and by many degrees her most formidable enemy. A prouder testimony to her power was never given than in these remarks of the Emperor on Waterloo. *Commentaries*, v., p. 208, Ed. 1867. "Si l'armée Anglaise, eût été détruite à Waterloo, à quoi eut servi aux alliés ce grand nombre d'armées qui se disposaient à franchir le Rhin, les Alpes et les Pyrénées?"

refused his Imperial title by the government of a nation which, in all ages, has acknowledged the rights of *de facto* sovereigns. He knew, too, that he was to be a prisoner; and his detention at St. Helena, for high reasons of state, was justifiable in the existing condition of the world. But his captivity ought not to have been made a martyrdom, a humiliating agony to a mighty spirit. Escape from St. Helena, an Atlantic islet, seldom visited by ships, with but one harbour, and girt for the most part by cliffs and rocks, would, in any circumstances, have been difficult in the extreme; and simple precautions would have made it impossible. But it was not enough to have a garrison on the spot; to keep light vessels cruising around; to place stations and watches on every eminence, in order to challenge a suspicious sail, and effectually to stop the approach of strangers. The arts of the inquisitor and the spy were employed to embitter Napoleon's bondage; and he was denied the rights that belong to misfortune. He was not permitted to move outside a narrow limit, without the attendance of a British officer;* his habitation was hemmed in by sentries at night; his simplest conversations were jealously watched; he could not send or receive a letter, except opened, and through the Governor's hands—a barbarous and degrading restriction—and he was called General Bonaparte, with studied insolence, as

* A near kinsman of my own was often orderly officer to Napoleon at St. Helena. The great exile never addressed a word to him, when on an odious duty, which he naturally disliked; but was most affable and courteous, at Longwood.

if France had not made him her ruler. The animosities, the passions, and the fears of the time account for if they cannot excuse, indignities, stupid alike, and revolting. But history has condemned Rome for her conduct to Hannibal; and history condemns England for her persecution, ignoble, galling, and weak, of Napoleon.

We turn from this sorry sight to a very different subject. Napoleon had several companions in exile, and the names of Las Cases, Montholon, Gourgaud, and Bertrand, have a place in history, as his friends in misfortune. The Emperor dictated a great deal to his followers; and they treasured many of the observations of their great master. These writings and reminiscences are happily extant; and they are of very high, if of unequal, value. Napoleon's Essays on Cæsar, Turenne, and Frederick, are military sketches of remarkable power; the narrative is lucid, succinct, and rapid; the criticism is profound and masterly; and Cæsar's work has been surpassed by his chronicler. The *Commentaries* of Napoleon contain an account of some of his most important campaigns; but, written as they were without sufficient books of reference, they abound in errors of detail, more or less grave; and like those of Cæsar, their evident model, they are sometimes unfair, and not trustworthy. But, in common with all that Napoleon has written on war, they are monuments of supreme genius; their distinctive excellence is that the author detaches the cardinal from the subordinate facts, and places them clearly before the reader, just as he seized the decisive points on the field of

manœuvre, and the field of battle; and they are unrivalled on questions of pure strategy, which are treated with perfect insight and logic. Napoleon, too, is admirable, and far before his time, when he deals with military organisation; and, if we except what belongs to material inventions, and to the changes these have necessarily involved, he has anticipated what German genius has achieved.

As regards what the Emperor has left behind, on politics, and affairs of state, this is inferior to his work in his peculiar art. His sketch of the history of the Republic, before the 18th Brumaire, contains thoughtful and eloquent passages; but it is obviously composed as a foil to the Consulate. As to his own acts and policy as a ruler, and, generally, as to the times of the Empire, Napoleon's remarks always deserve study; they are sometimes singularly just and profound; more than once they penetrate the depths of the future. But they convey the impression that a great artist is draping himself, so to speak, for posterity; they are occasionally mere adroit sophistry; in some respects they are not truthful. Napoleon treated his slanderers with just scorn; dwells with proper emphasis on all that he did to promote the grandeur and welfare of France; claims truly that he had always identified his own interests with those of the nation, at least as he understood these, and argued that, up to 1814, certainly, France sanctioned his career of war and conquest. He contends, also, with much truth, that France was unfit for political freedom, when he became her ruler in 1800–1; and he fairly lays claim to the highest

praise as an administrator in civil affairs, as a founder of social order and peace, as a legislator of supreme merit, as a great sovereign who put down anarchy. Some of his observations are strangely prophetic; he predicted that the *régime* of the Bourbons would give way to the Monarchy of July, and be succeeded by a return to the Empire; he foresaw that Russia would gain a bad ascendency on the Continent, after 1814–15; he anticipated the break-up of the Holy Alliance; he foretold the risings of 1848–49, he declared that nothing could arrest the democratic movement, which may yet, as he said, make a Republic of Europe. But the insatiable conqueror was trifling with fact, when he asserted that he overran the Continent in the ultimate interest of civilisation and peace; that the domination of France was designed to make her the head of a Federation of States, emancipated from the feudalism of the past; and that he remodelled the map of Europe with his sword, in order, simply, to improve its boundaries. And the greatest of despots was mocking at truth, when he called himself "the Messiah of a popular gospel"; when he declared that he always had it in view to give free institutions to France; when he tried to make out that his chief object, as a conqueror, was to fuse races, kept hitherto apart, into true nations; when he argued that he had always been the champion of the independence and rights of the people.

The years of captivity rolled slowly on, and added to the weight of the exile's sufferings. The superior naval officers, who had had Napoleon in their charge, for some time had been succeeded by a regular

governor; and this appointment had proved unfortunate. Sir Hudson Lowe was not a bad man; but he was coarse-minded and devoid of tact; and he seemed to take pleasure in trying to make the will of his prisoner bend to his own. The restrictions placed on Napoleon were made more severe; with his followers he was exposed to petty insults; and miserable bickerings arose about such trifles as the cost of the discrowned Emperor's table, as if the bread of exile was not sufficiently bitter. The captive fiercely kicked against the pricks; it has been said that he would have shown more dignity had he borne vexation and wrong in silence; and yet the poet is true to his art, when he makes Prometheus, held down by Force, complain from his barren rock to Humanity. Napoleon by degrees gave up exercise, or refused to quit his abode, Longwood; and growing disease increased the pain and irritation of a nature wounded to the quick.

Additional circumstances made his life a succession of sorrows from which hope had vanished. His cause was, for the present, lost; his friends and adherents had been proscribed; his family, to which he was strongly attached, and which returned the affection he deserved—mother, sisters, and brothers—were the waifs and strays of the tempest which had wrought his destruction. Yet, probably, what he felt most keenly was the conduct of his unworthy wife; Marie Louise had long been a stranger to him, and had found happiness in the vows of her chamberlain; and she had not sent her husband a message to tell him of the child, once heir to august

Empire, now the Astyanax of a fallen House, though she knew well how his father loved him. The captive, nevertheless, might have found, if not consolation, a sad sense of relief, as he learned from afar, what was the state of Europe. He had trampled the Continent under his heel; he had made France weary of war and of arbitrary power. But the evil he did had not been without good; he had desolated and disturbed the world; but civilisation had followed in his path of conquest. All this had changed; and, amidst seeming peace, three fourths of Europe were suffering from ignoble tyranny. The counter-revolution was supreme in France; the kings and princes who had turned to account the patriotic rising of Germany, had broken their pledges to give her liberty, and had meshed her, again, in the shackles of the past; Italy was in the degrading bonds of Austria; Rome had passed, again, under the rule of priests; Ferdinand was exasperating Spain, and her people. The hope of freedom and progress seemed gone, while the Holy Alliance spread over the Continent; and, terrible as the sword of Napoleon had been, it was less injurious to the estate of man, than the deadening and destructive sceptre of Metternich, the strong representative of the ideas of the past.

It became apparent, by the close of 1820, that the end of this extraordinary life was at hand. Though his energies had seemed to defy fatigue, Napoleon's constitution had never been strong; his health had begun to fail when he was only forty-three; and he had long suffered from two distressing maladies. At

St. Helena symptoms of cancer, which had caused his father's death, were developed by degrees; the climate of the island is not unwholesome; but seclusion, suffering, and mental agony accelerated the progress of mortal disease. The wretched squabbles with the Governor had never ceased; threats had been made to break in on the exile's privacy, in order to secure proof that he was at Longwood; and Las Cases and Gourgaud had left the island.

Napoleon calmly prepared for death; and the profound religious sympathies seen in his character, became strongly manifest, as he bade life farewell. He spent hours in studying the Sacred Writings, showing a keen perception of their moral grandeur; had mass regularly performed in the chief room at Longwood; more than once rebuked the scoffs of a young physician, and told him to keep his atheism to himself; and spoke eloquently on Christianity and the Faith. In the first months of 1821 his strength gave way; he was racked with almost unceasing pain; and the food he tried to swallow yielded no nourishment. As April was closing Napoleon made his will; and the document is one of singular interest. The offspring and master of the French Revolution declared that he died in communion with the Holy Church, which had "taken him to her bosom since the day of his birth." A few kind words were bestowed on Marie Louise; but the child of many hopes and of an unknown future, was the centre of the exile's deepest affection. The munificence, which was one of the Emperor's qualities, was seen in a great number of legacies, distri-

buted with forethought and pious care; and their benefactor did not forget his family, his friends, his adherents, and his devoted soldiery. One bequest was unworthy of so great a man; Napoleon gave a sum of money to an inferior officer, who had been tried for an attempt to kill Wellington; but he believed that the Duke was a personal enemy; and allowance should be made for the agony of death. By the 3d of May the captive had become unconscious; the last words that fell from his lips were "*mon fils . . . l'armée . . . Desaix*"; and on the 5th his parting spirit was released, after many hours of intense suffering. Napoleon was buried beneath a willow tree, which rose over one of the haunts of his solitude; and he was borne to the grave by the mourning soldiers of the nation he had tried in vain to subdue. Yet St. Helena was not to be his last place of rest; he had written in his will that "he wished to repose along the banks of the Seine, amidst the French people he loved"; and England gave back the mighty dead to France. Napoleon sleeps beneath the dome of the Invalides, not far from the spot where Turenne lies; and no place in Europe, perhaps, is of more profound interest. Yet the coming ages may regret that the rock in the Atlantic was not a permanent sepulchre. We do not know where Hannibal and Alexander lie; St. Helena would have been the tomb, for all time, of Napoleon.

The survivors are very few, who have seen Napoleon; but innumerable portraits preserve his image. He was thin, and of delicate aspect, in youth; his

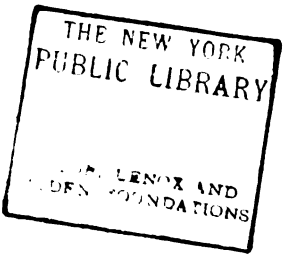
frame and his features seemed to expand with his fortunes, and he became heavy and obese as age advanced. But the character of his countenance underwent no change; and it was remarkable for its grandeur and beauty. The outline of the face was of the best Italian type, that which we see in the first Cæsars; the firmly-set jaw, and the somewhat rigid mouth expressed a strong and resolute nature; but Napoleon's smile was singularly sweet; and his glance, ardent with genius, or fired with passion, yet often possessing a fascinating spell, deeply impressed everyone who felt its power. The Emperor was short in stature, but well formed; and the historic figure of the "Little Corporal," in his grey coat, and his plain uniform, amidst the glittering staff of his plumed marshals, will go down to a remote posterity.

The spirit that informed this shape of majesty was one of the most extraordinary ever bestowed on man. The chief intellectual gifts of Napoleon were an imagination of wonderful force; a power of calculation that embraced everything, and yet grasped the smallest details; the master-faculty of always perceiving the dominant fact in what was before him, of separating from it what was subordinate, and of seeing how it could be turned to account; and admirable celerity and keenness of thought. His moral faculties were not less remarkable; ambition that nothing seemed to satisfy; self-confidence that received no check from experience; indefatigable energy that never tired; a devouring passion to achieve greatness, to do mighty deeds, to acquire

THE DYING NAPOLEON.

BY VELA, AN ITALIAN SCULPTOR.

Exhibited at the Paris 1878 exhibition, and subsequently purchased by the French government, and removed to Palace of Versailles.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renown; decision, firmness, and strength of character; dexterity and adroitness in difficult crises, extraordinary craft, and the power of concealing whatever designs or purpose were formed; and, very distinctly, a profound contempt for the great mass of ordinary men, a belief that the world is ruled by force, a conviction that genius can accomplish anything. To this should be added unbending pride; inexorable resolution in compassing ends, with little scruple as regards means; and yet, with all this, a deep sense of the Divine, a temper kindly, if sometimes vehement; generosity, lavish almost to excess, a strong attachment to the ties of family; and a disposition that shrank from cruelty, and yet that seemed indifferent to human suffering when ambition was striving to gain its objects.

A being, with gifts such as these, would have probably risen to high eminence in any age. But the time of Napoleon was that of the French Revolution, that is, of a period of incessant war, when the boundaries of states were suddenly shifted, when France rushed into a strife with old Europe, when ideas, portending immense changes in the estate of man, came in fierce conflict with the effete feudalism and kingship of the past, and when the military art was, so to speak, given wings, under new conditions that had become developed. Supreme genius, in such an age of trouble, rose by its own force to the heights of fortune, and for years amazed and affrighted mankind. Napoleon's faculties were first absorbed in war, and war was his chosen and peculiar sphere. As a leader of armies he grandly displayed

most of the intellectual and moral qualities which were the ground-work, as it were, of his character; and we trace them in his career from Montenotte to Waterloo. He was pre-eminent for his splendid conceptions in war; for his mastery of the situation before him; for his administrative and organising power; for his capacity to see how to move with effect, on the theatre of operations, and on the field of battle; for his command over the troops he directed; for his readiness and resource at grave conjunctures. It is unnecessary to say what he was as a conqueror; what his daring and audacity were; how he marched from the Adige to the Nile, and from Madrid to Moscow; how he confronted the world in arms for almost useless provinces; how wonderful he was in deceiving an enemy; how he shed the blood of his soldiers like water, and treated them as mere pawns in his game, and yet how he won their hearts, and attracted their sympathies. Taken altogether Napoleon was, by far, the first of the masters of war in the modern world; in great military combinations he has no equal; his movements were at once scientific, grand, and methodical; he carried out the principles of his art with an originality and brilliancy never seen again; and he was unrivalled in the difficult tasks, of reaching the communications and rear of an enemy, of manœuvring between divided armies, of attacking, and beating them in detail, and, above all, perhaps, in the genius of stratagem.

Yet the extraordinary faculties of this consummate warrior did not always retain their true bal-

ance; and his triumphs were followed by immense disasters. Napoleon's imagination sometimes overcame his judgment; his confidence in himself became arrogance; his indomitable pride marred his common-sense; his intense eagerness to strike down his enemy more than once exposed him to peril and defeat; the extravagance of the conqueror in his later campaigns perverted the views of the military chief. The time on which he fell had, in two respects, a marked influence on his career as a warrior. The French Revolution had given a strong impulse to the human mind in every sphere of action, and had made it bold and aspiring alike; and possibly Napoleon in a less troubled age would not have conceived such grand projects as the march across the Alps that led to Marengo, and the march from the Channel, on Ulm and Vienna. The multiplication of roads, too, and the progress of husbandry, which had marked the last thirty years of the eighteenth century, enabled Napoleon to move his armies with a rapidity never before known, and largely to dispense with the *impedimenta* of war; and this was an immense advantage to his offensive strategy. But it must be borne in mind that, when these conditions failed, the methods, which depended on them, were not successful, as was seen in the campaign of 1806–7, and especially in the invasion of Russia.

Napoleon, however, was a universal genius, greatest as a warrior, but great as a ruler. The obscure son of a Corsican lawyer became the sovereign of Revolutionary France, and founded an Empire which

overspread the Continent. Here, again, he owed much to the influences of his time; and these alone, indeed, made his achievements possible. He found France exhausted after the frenzy of 1793, wearied of a feeble and worthless government, affrighted at defeat, and torn by anarchy; and the nation was in a state to accept the lead of a master-mind of commanding power, especially as Napoleon had stood aloof from the strife of factions, and the intrigues of parties. France was literally wax in the hands of her chief; and her institutions and social order were almost permanently moulded by the First Consul. Many of his faculties were engaged in this gigantic work; his powerful imagination saw in the forms of the past the models on which to shape the present; his administrative gifts and incessant industry were never more magnificently displayed; his ambition gathered the State into his strong hands; his religious sympathies became manifest in the restoration of the Church in France, and in the policy of the Concordat, and of all that belonged to it. The good he accomplished was immense and evident; he bound up the wounds of the nation, and to a certain extent, reconciled classes; he checked the extravagance of the Revolution, and protected the interests that had grown up with it; he secured the equality before the law, and the liberation of the soil, which had been the best triumphs of 1789; the institutions he founded, which Time has hallowed, the noble public works, which are the glory of his reign, remain monuments of his supreme genius. Political liberty, indeed, he jealously withheld; and

he became the uncontrolled Despot of France, if an enlightened and a beneficent Despot. Undoubtedly, however, in the first years of his power, Frenchmen had no thought of political rights; they yearned for rest, security, and strong government, and these they obtained in full measure; and it may well be doubted whether the generation which had taken part in the Reign of Terror, was capable of political liberty. Still, had Napoleon been a statesman of the highest order, had he had a clear and perfect conception of what is best for the estate of man, he would have made his despotism less harsh and absolute; and he would have trained France to become fit for freedom by cultivating peace, self-government, and social progress. But this was utterly alien to Napoleon's nature; he had a settled contempt for the great mass of mankind; he disliked, and did not countenance popular instincts, passions, movements, and tendencies; he scorned liberal principles as "ideology"; and if this conviction was not unnatural, in the case of one who abhorred the Revolutionary crimes, he certainly had no sympathy with political liberty.

The First Consul became the Emperor, and founded a domination which made France the undisputed Queen of the Continent. The Empire extended beyond the France of the "natural boundaries," over Italy, Holland, and the North Sea coasts; it placed vassal kings in Germany, Naples, and Spain; its supremacy was felt as far as the Niemen. The age, not less than the sword of Napoleon, contributed to form this creation of force; the Monarchies and

Aristocracies of old Europe had decayed in the course of the eighteenth century; they were at first weakened by the French Revolution; and they were overcome by its mighty champion. This edifice of conquest, it is unnecessary to say, revealed the character of its builder in its grandeur and its defects. Napoleon, his imagination fired by the glories of the past, endeavoured to reproduce the work of Charlemagne in the civilisation of the modern world; his ambition sent him from the Rhine and the Po to the Vistula; his energy, his statecraft, his genius in war, were tasked for years, to maintain the dominion, which expanded as he moved on his path of victory. When the fabric had fallen, he tried, in vain, to show that he had reared it only in self-defence; that it grew almost in spite of himself; that, in any event, he never intended that it should retain its vast proportions, after a general peace. These pleas, if plausible, are not borne out by the facts; and history records her impartial verdict, that Napoleon, finding the Continent easy to subdue, overran it in the pride of his power, and in his faith in his genius, and his invincible sword, and that he believed the Empire would be a lasting possession, a permanent monument of its great founder. This conviction was obviously false and baseless; and it proves that Napoleon, splendid as were his gifts, was essentially wanting in the far-seeing wisdom, the self-restraint, the caution, the prudence, which distinguish statesmen of the first order. His supremacy was a defiance to History, Law, and Tradition; and it seems extraordinary that a conqueror should ever imagine

that ancient states, and great civilised races, would patiently submit to his unnatural yoke. The policy, too, of the Emperor, as his power advanced, almost inevitably led to the events which ultimately caused his tremendous overthrow. Tilsit was pregnant with a European conflict; the invasion of Spain was a gigantic mistake; the Continental system meant universal conquest. And what can be said of the negotiations of 1813, but that obstinacy and arrogance blinded Napoleon? In certain passages of his career this extraordinary man almost sinks to the level of one of the conquerors of the East.

The career of Napoleon thus separates into two parts, which present a strange and astonishing contrast. In the first part he is simply a victorious general; but he uses with moderation the great power which his position gives him, as he deals with old Europe. He then becomes the undisputed master of France; and though he gives proof of despotic tendencies, he is one of the ablest, and most successful of rulers. In the second part, we see the uncontrolled despot, wielding irresistible military force; he makes France the centre of a colossal Empire; he subjugates and bestrides the Continent; and he proceeds on his blood-stained path of conquest, until millions of men are destroyed by the sword, the civilised world is leagued against him, and France succumbs, defeated, exhausted, prostrate. Yet there is nothing surprising in this antithesis, Napoleon's character and the circumstances being taken into account; commanding genius and unbridled ambition overleap the bounds

of prudence and wisdom, and usually work out their own ruin, as history shows in a hundred examples. Under conditions like these the nature of man seems to undergo a complete transformation; and moderation and reason by degrees give place to the excesses of the lawless and arbitrary will.

And here it is that detraction has found the means of unjustly attacking Napoleon. His slanderers insist that his conduct was always of a piece, and that, from first to last, there was no real change in him. To maintain this theory, they either keep out of sight, or misrepresent the achievements of his early manhood; they interpret his splendid prime by his later years, and exaggerate all that was worst in these, in order effectually to pervert the truth; and, then, by accumulating calumnies of every kind, and defaming his life in public and private, they have set up an odious and revolting counterfeit that has little in common with the true original. Despite his imperfections, errors, and misdeeds, Napoleon was one of the greatest of men; and it is vain to describe him as a kind of Attila in war, a Borgia in government and affairs of state, a Nero in cruelty and licentious wickedness, a reckless, inhuman, and selfish tyrant. And as we look back at that career of wonders, Justice takes into account the facts which explain much that was devious and wrong; and the good largely exceeds the evil. Few conquerors have been tempted as Napoleon was; France ministered to his ambition for years; and if he easily subdued the Continent, the Continent was ever plotting against him. The benefits, too, he conferred on France,

were immense; and if destruction followed in their train, civilisation attended the march of his armies. In lands ravaged by his sword, his memory lives as the destroyer of Feudalism and unjust privilege; and his name has sunk deep into the heart of races which rightly spurned his oppressive yoke.

The best of Napoleon's work will live; but his Empire, that, like the Satanic Temple, rose as an exhalation, as quickly vanished. In his case, the manifestation of the Divine Will, called in our ignorance the irony of Fate, exhibited itself with peculiar clearness. That devouring ambition which tried to make Europe its domain, and never found rest in its march of conquest, was confined to the precincts of an Atlantic rock, and fretted in vain in ignoble bondage. That prodigious energy which engrossed the administration of a gigantic Empire, in its main parts, and its smallest details, and of military force which overawed the world, was kept within the narrow bounds of the life of a captive. Power was destroyed by its own excess; genius in war was confounded by its own greatness; the policy which seemed to assure the results of conquest, Tilsit, Bayonne, and the Austrian marriage, became the means that led to defeat and ruin. It was the same if we look, beyond Napoleon, to the fortunes of the nation he ruled. He made France the foremost state of the Continent; he believed her supremacy would be enduring. But he contributed to the fall of the old German Empire, which kept Germany in the shackles of the past; he encouraged the dream of an independent Italy; his oppression fused to-

gether the Teutonic race, and effaced the divisions which made it powerless; and all this has tended to surround France with great and growing nations, which have become her rivals, and to deprive her of the ascendency she once possessed. The Unity of Italy, and of Germany, may, to some extent, be ascribed to Napoleon; and it is a significant fact that Austria, Germany, Italy, have, for some time, been combined in a league unquestionably hostile to France and her interests. And so it has been with that instrument of power, which, in a special manner, expressed his genius. He made the French army the terror of Europe; he encircled it with a halo of renown, which Leipzig and Waterloo hardly dimmed. And the result was that the glory of the past proved a fatal deception as time rolled on; that army lived on its grand traditions, did not adapt itself to changed conditions of war, gradually lost its strength, and military worth; and was finally engulphed in an immense catastrophe. Had that army, and its chiefs, thought less of Jena, they might not have mourned for Metz and Sedan.

As Ruler of the State and a chief of armies, Napoleon was a kind and most generous master, of the ministers and generals he directed and led. He was intolerant of deception, misconduct, and waste, like all administrators of a high order; but no one made more allowances for mere errors; he was usually considerate and sympathetic; and his munificence to his inferiors was almost excessive. He was, however, imperious and exacting; and his personality was so overwhelming, that he bowed his subordinates to

meek submission, and fashioned them on a type of servitude. He really was his own Foreign Minister; he controlled the Finances and even the Tribunals in France; he often treated Talleyrand as a high kind of clerk; he made Champagny and Maret his mere docile instruments. This was injurious in government and in affairs of state, and had evil results in the conduct of war. Napoleon's generals and marshals were simply his satellites; if we except Masséna, Davoust, and Soult, not one was fit for a great independent command; they were so trained to look up to the Emperor, that they wanted self-reliance, and true capacity; they were able soldiers, but not leaders. They were inferior, as a rule, to the best chiefs of the Republican armies of 1794–1800, and the disastrous consequences were often manifest. The energy of Desaix saved Marengo; the feebleness of Grouchy caused the loss of Waterloo. The influence, on the other hand, of Napoleon over the mass of his army, made wholly for good; it was extraordinary, and almost passed belief. He was prodigal of the blood of his soldiers; he sacrificed them to attain his ends; he immolated them, in tens of thousands, in his wars; but he was careful of their wants, and mastered their hearts. They instinctively felt the power of his genius; they were carried away by the impassioned words he addressed to them on the eve of his battles; and he obtained efforts from them, which no other chiefs have ever obtained from French soldiers, not even Condé, Turenne, or Villars.

Napoleon is less known as the head of a family, and in the life of home, which he hardly knew in

manhood. In this province, calumny has run riot; and history turns away from revolting charges, heaped up by defamers without a sense of shame, and not sustained by evidence that will bear the light. Nor should we judge Napoleon by angry letters occasionally written to his crowned brothers; they reveal his domineering and impatient temper; but what they really prove is that these vassal kings were placed in a position false to himself, and that they were unequal to carry out a policy, extravagant and well-nigh impossible. There are blots on Napoleon's private life, but he * was devotedly attached to his surviving parent; he was an indulgent, nay, an uxorious husband; he raised his brothers and sisters to great positions, as he rose himself to supreme eminence, and this, too, sometimes against his interest; his affection for his son was heartfelt and tender; he had a deep sense of the ties and duties of family. His letters to Joséphine and Marie Louise, to Eugene and Hortense Beauharnais, to Joseph, Jerôme, and Louis Bonaparte, in all that relates to domestic affairs, give proof of a kindly and sympathetic nature; and they are sometimes charming in their delicate grace. Nor—apart

* Napoleon at St. Helena described his family in these words: *Corr.*, tome xxxii., 295: "Joseph, par tout pays, serait l'ornement de la société; Lucien celui de toute assemblée politique. Jerôme, en mûrissant, eût été propre à gouverner; je découvrais en lui de véritables esperances. Louis eût plu et se fût fait remarquer partout. Ma sœur Elisa etait une tête mâle, une âme forte; elle aura montré beaucoup de philosophie dans l'adversité. Caroline est fort habile et très capable. Pauline, la plus belle femme de son temps peut-être, a été et demeurera jusqu'a a la fin la meilleure créature vivante. Quant à ma mère, elle est digne de tous les genres de vénération."

from transient squabbles and jealousies—were his kindred ungrateful or untrue; they did not abandon him in adverse fortune; and if Marie Louise basely threw him off, the wife* of Jerôme, though a stranger in blood, tried to be his solace and support in exile.

As is the case with all men, however great they may be, Napoleon, we repeat, reflected the spirit of his age; he was the grandest embodiment of it; and his age was that of the French Revolution. He was not free from its immoral licence; though in this particular, he favourably compares, with most of the kings and princes of the Europe of his day. Its want of principle, and absence of scruple, was very distinctly apparent in him, and fell in with his immense ambition, and with his vehement daring and impetuous nature. But he abhorred the bloody deeds to which the Revolution gave birth; and many as were his faults, as a ruler, few men have climbed to a throne, in an age of anarchy, and have been guilty of so few acts, that, properly speaking, can be deemed crimes. If he was pitiless in carrying out his purposes, he was not cruel, or even revengeful; and the instances of his clemency are many and striking. The callous selfishness which has been laid to his charge was, essentially, quite a different quality; it was like the feeling which prompted Louis XIV. to exclaim that he was himself the State; and Napoleon thought more of France, than of his own grandeur, and staked and lost all in the national interests.

The bearing of this extraordinary man in the daily round of his life, may deserve the passing notice of

* See a touching letter from this remarkable woman to the Prince Regent of England. *Corr.*, tome xxxii., 461.

history. Napoleon, we have seen, was taciturn and morose in youth ; his nature seemed stern and self-contained ; and this was probably largely due to his life of privations. Under the influence of ever-favouring Fortune, this reticence and austerity vanished ; his tastes and sympathies seemed to expand ; and Napoleon became joyous, talkative, fond of companionship, brilliant in social intercourse, and yet secure of the ascendency which is the peculiar mark of genius. When he had risen to the summit of earthly grandeur he did not always gracefully wear his dignities ; the stiffness and awkwardness of the parvenu occasionally peeped out behind his state ; he had not the princely charm and ease of the Bourbon kings. And yet these were but spots on the surface, and the extraordinary fascination, which Napoleon exercised over the most illustrious and distinguished men, and the keenness and pregnancy of his conversation, delighted the real observers in his Court. For the rest the Emperor was quick in temper and brusque in manner ; he was not always pleasing in his address to women ; he never quite lost the ways of the camp ; he had not the urbanity of the finished patrician. Too much, however, has been made of these blemishes ; Napoleon was long the centre of an admiration almost universal, and by no means feigned ; and few great men have appeared in history who have retained in misfortune such devoted followers.

NAPOLEON'S SIGNATURES.*

From a letter dated 1793, addressed to the "Directory."

From a document dated, the 13th Fructidor, year IV., written at the headquarters of the French army, Italy.

Napoleon, Emperor of the French, 1804.

*These signatures are reproduced from the *North American Review* with the kind permission of the publishers.

From a proclamation after the battle of Austerlitz.

After the campaign of 1806.

Written during the burning of Moscow, September 21st, 1812.

Dated November 6th, 1812, during the retreat from Russia.

Erfurt, October 23d, 1813, after defeat at Leipzig.

Fontainebleau, 4th of April, 1814.

St. Helena.

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